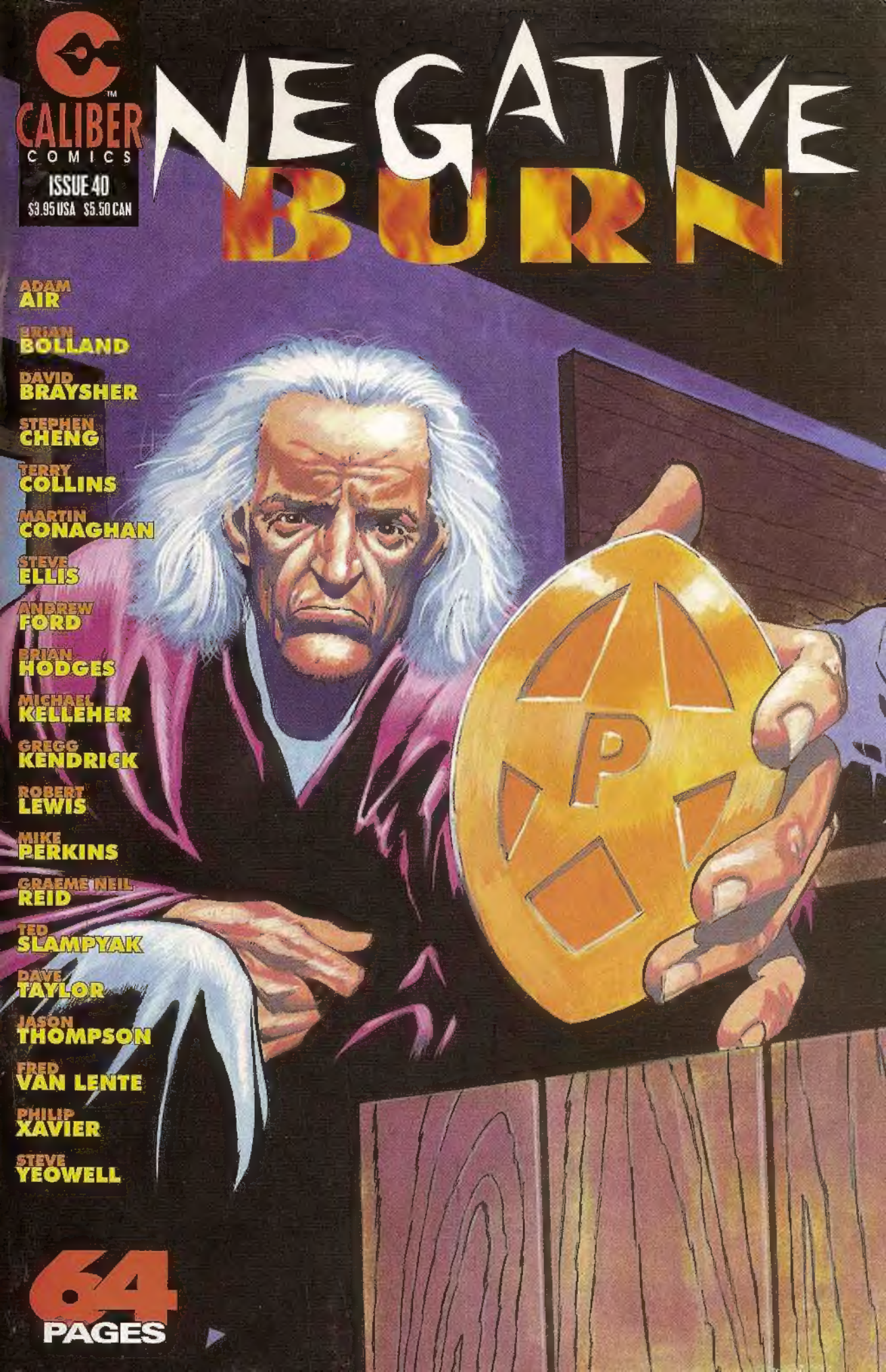

CALIBER
COMICS
ISSUE 40
$3.95 USA $5.50 CAN
NEGATIVE
BURN
ADAM AIR
BRIAN BOLLAND
DAVID BRAYSHER
STEPHEN CHENG
TERRY COLLINS
MARTIN CONAGHAN
STEVE ELLIS
ANDREW FORD
BRIAN HODGES
MICHAEL KELLEHER
GREGG KENDRICK
ROBERT LEWIS
MIKE PERKINS
GRAEME NEIL REID
TED SLAMPYAK
DAVE TAYLOR
JASON THOMPSON
FRED VAN LENTE
PHILIP XAVIER
STEVE YEOWELL
64 PAGES

Joe Pruett / Editor
VOLUME ONE • NUMBER FORTY

1 THE BRUTALIZERS
written by Martin Conaghan
illustrated by Dave Braysher and Mike Perkins

7 MR. MAMOULIAN
written and illustrated by Brian Bolland

8 SUZI ROMAINE
written and illustrated by Ted Slampyak

16 THE BIG DATE
written by Fred Van Lente
illustrated by Steve Ellis

24 THE TALE OF THE SIX-LEGGED OCTOPI
written and illustrated by Robert Lewis

25 RIB
written by Andrew Ford
illustrated by Michael Kelleher

32 CHOKE
written and illustrated by Graeme Neil Reid

34 THE IGNORANT LAYMAN
written by Jason Thompson
illustrated by Jason Thompson and Adam Air

41 MR. MURRAY
written and illustrated by Dave Taylor

42 THE VICTIM
written by Gregg Kendrick
illustrated by Philip Xavier

50 THE MEANING OF LIFE
written and illustrated by Stephen Cheng

54 BEDROCK BLUES
written by Terry Collins
illustrated by Brian Hodges

Cover Art by STEVE YEOWELL

Desperado Studios
P.O. Box 893
Acworth, GA
30101

CompuServe
72164,1134

Staff Letterer
Roxanne Starr

Production Manager
Nathan Pride

British Liaison
Malcolm Bourne

Managing Editor
James Pruett

Creator/ Retailer Liaison
Nancy Durand

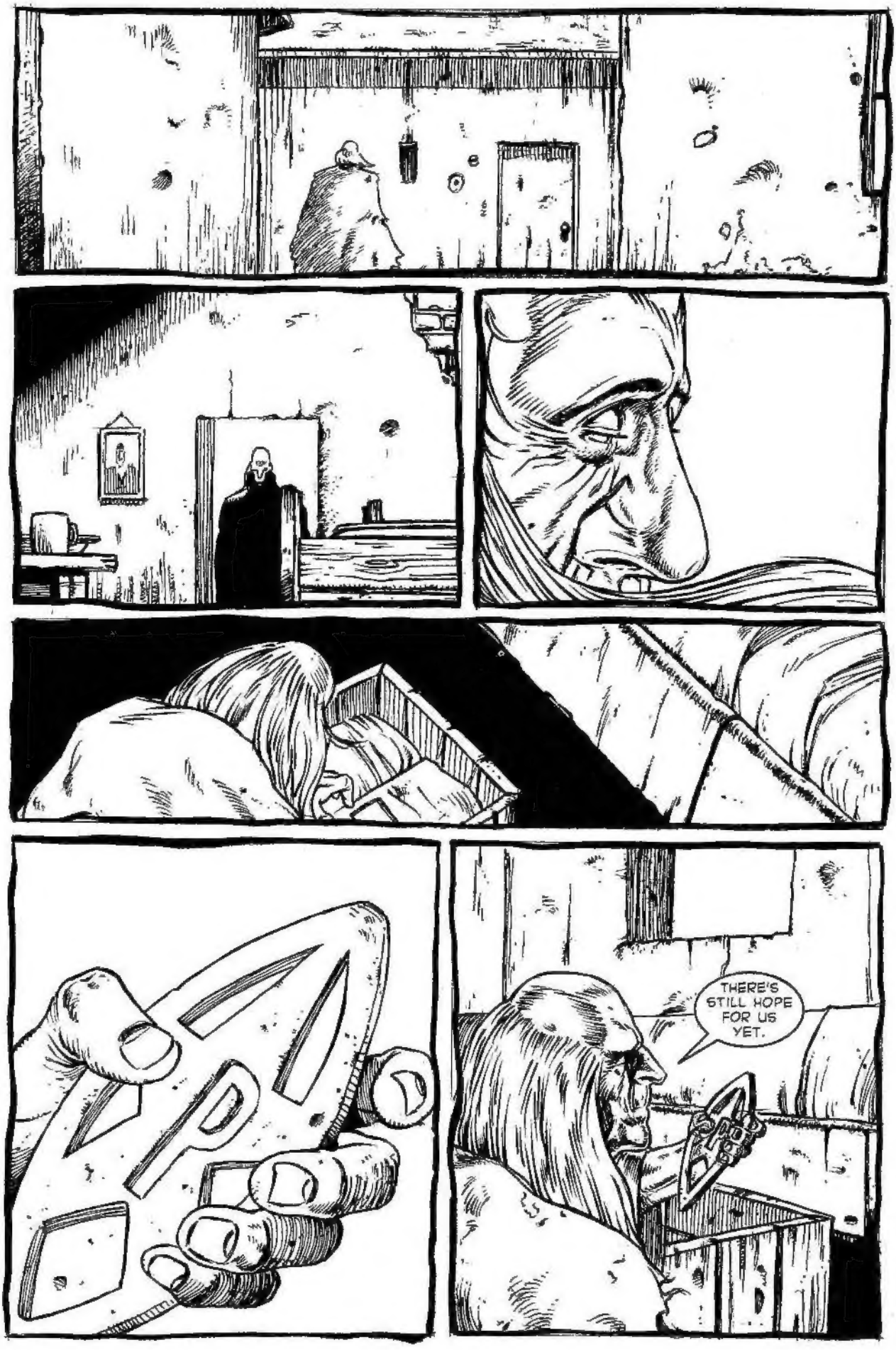
Publisher
Gary Reed

SUBSCRIPTIONS

USA 6 issues $24.00
12 issues $48.00 /
Canada or Overseas 6 issues $33.00
12 issues $66.00
Please make check or money order in U.S. Dollars payable to JOE PRUETT. P.O. Box 893, Acworth, GA 30101

NEGATIVE BURN. Vol. 1-no. 40. Published monthly by Caliber Comics, 225 N. Sheldon Road, Plymouth, MI 48170. NEGATIVE BURN™ and ©1996 by Charles Moore, James Pruett and Joe Pruett. THE BRUTALIZERS ©1996 Martin Conaghan, art ©1996 Dave Braysher, Mike Perkins. MR. MAMOULIAN ©1996 Brian Bolland. SUZI ROMAINE ©1996 Ted Slampyak. THE BIG DATE ©1996 Fred Van Lente, art ©1996 Steve Ellis. THE TALE OF THE SIX-LEGGED OCTOPI ©1996 Robert Lewis. RIB ©1996 Andrew Ford, art ©1996 Michael Kelleher. CHOKE ©1996 Graeme Neil Reid. THE IGNORANT LAYMAN ©1996 Jason Thompson. MR. MURRAY ©1996 Dave Taylor. THE VICTIM ©1996 Gregg Kendrick, art ©1996 Philip Xavier. THE MEANING OF LIFE ©1996 Stephen Cheng. BEDROCK BLUES ©1996 Terry Collins, art ©1996 Brain Hodges. Cover art ©1996 Steve Yeowell. Any similarity without satirical purpose to a person, name, character, or institution is a coincidence. Printed in the USA.

WEST COVE, CENTRAL RIZON.
THE BRUTALIZERS
Part Three: RAID ON REILLY'S
AND GET MISTER FINNIGAN TO LOOK AT YOUR LEG.
I'M REALLY SORRY, BUT I'D MUCH RATHER YOU LEFT US.
LOOK, ALL I WANT IS SOME FOOD AND WATER, THEN I'LL BE ON MY WAY--I'M NOT LOOKING FOR ANY *THANKS* IF THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK.
LOOK, MISTER --WHATEVER YOUR NAME IS--I'M SORRY, BUT IF THE BRUTALIZERS LEARN THAT WE'VE GIVEN YOU SUPPLIES ...WELL...I THINK YOU *KNOW* WHAT'LL HAPPEN.
I SAVED THAT MAN'S *LIFE*--AT LEAST GIVE ME SOME WATER FOR MY *HORSE*.
I'M SORRY, NOW *PLEASE*-- LEAVE US ALONE, WE DON'T WANT YOUR HELP.


THERE'S STILL HOPE FOR US YET.

WE GOT FOURTEEN DRUMS OF OIL AND ABOUT NINE THOUSAND IN CURRENCY --ALL THE BOOZE HAS BEEN FINISHED.
REILLY'S
GOOD, WE SHOULD MOVE ON BEFORE THE SUN SETS.
I THINK WE SHOULD GO BACK, FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO BUGS AND CABBAGE-- THEY SHOULD HAVE CAUGHT UP WITH US HOURS AGO.
YOU'RE RIGHT-- SOUTH.
VERMMMM

VRRRRMM
EEEEEER
VERRRRRM

WHOEVER DID THIS...
...I'LL RIP OUT THEIR LUNGS.
THERE'S SOME TRACKS OVER HERE --HORSE TRACKS!
THERE'S A TOWN ABOUT SIXTY KYLES THAT WAY-- LET'S GET THEM!
NO.--FIRST WE GIVE THESE MEN A PROPER BURIAL, THEN WE HEAD BACK TO THE CAMP.
TOMMOROW, WE WILL PUNISH THE MURDERERS WHO DID THIS.

End of Part Three

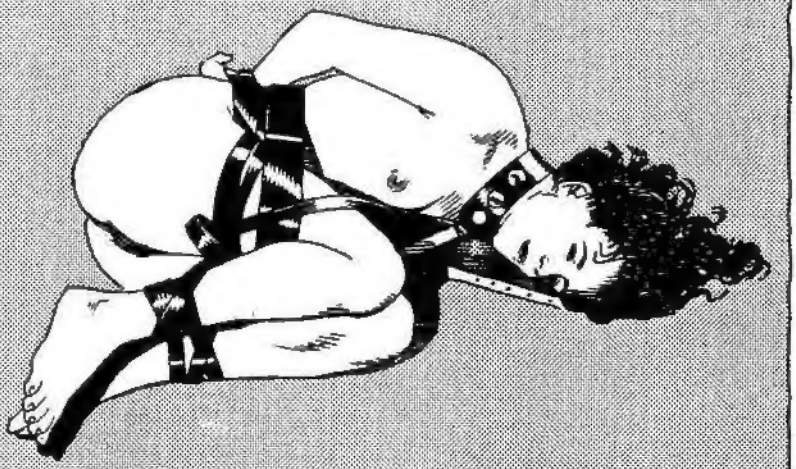
Next: MASSACRE AT WEST COVE

MR. MAMOULIAN
TIED UP

THIS WOMAN HAS BEEN TIED UP.

SHE HAS BEEN TIED UP BY THE FAMOUS SURREALIST ARTIST MAN RAY (1890-). PRESUMABLY SHE AGREED OF HER OWN FREE WILL TO BE TIED UP.

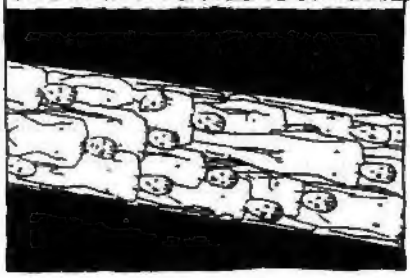
PERHAPS SHE WAS TRICKED INTO THINKING IT WAS **ART**. WHO KNOWS.



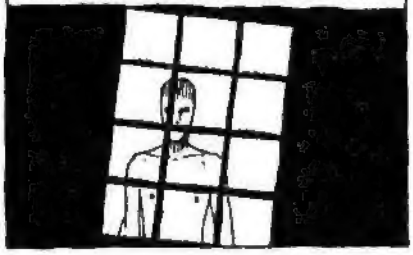
SHE HAS GIVEN UP HER FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT. SHE HAS GIVEN UP HER DIGNITY. SHE HAS GIVEN UP RESPONSIBILITY FOR HERSELF. SHE HAS GIVEN UP EVERYTHING.

YOU AND I — ON THE OTHER HAND — ARE NOT BOUND NAKED WITH LEATHER THONGS. WE ARE FREE. FREE TO MOVE ABOUT AS WE PLEASE WITH DIGNITY AND SELF-RESPONSIBILITY.

FREE TO WAKE UP AT 7:00 EVERY MORNING TO THE SOUND OF THE ALARM CLOCK. **FREE** TO SQUEEZE OURSELVES DOWN TUBES UNDER THE GROUND, ALONG WITH THOUSANDS OF OTHERS WHO ARE **FREE** TO DO THE SAME.



FREE TO LET OTHER PEOPLE MAKE OUR DECISIONS FOR US. **FREE** TO LOCK AND BOLT OURSELVES INTO CONCRETE BOXES. **FREE** TO CURTAIL ANY ACTIVITY THAT WOULD COMPROMISE OUR DIGNITY OR JEOPARDISE THE ORDER WHICH **BINDS** SOCIETY TOGETHER.



FREEDOM IS A TERRIFYING NOTION. WHAT WE REALLY WANT IS TO BE DELIVERED FROM DECISION MAKING. RESCUED FROM UNDER THE WEIGHT OF OUR OWN DIGNITY. WE WANT TO BE BOUND TO THE WHEEL OF SOCIAL ORDER. BOUND HAND AND FOOT. NAKED. **FREE** FROM RESPONSIBILITY, FROM DIGNITY. **FREE** FROM EVEN HAVING TO BOTHER TO MOVE. TRULY **FREE**!

DO YOU WANT ME TO TIE YOU UP?

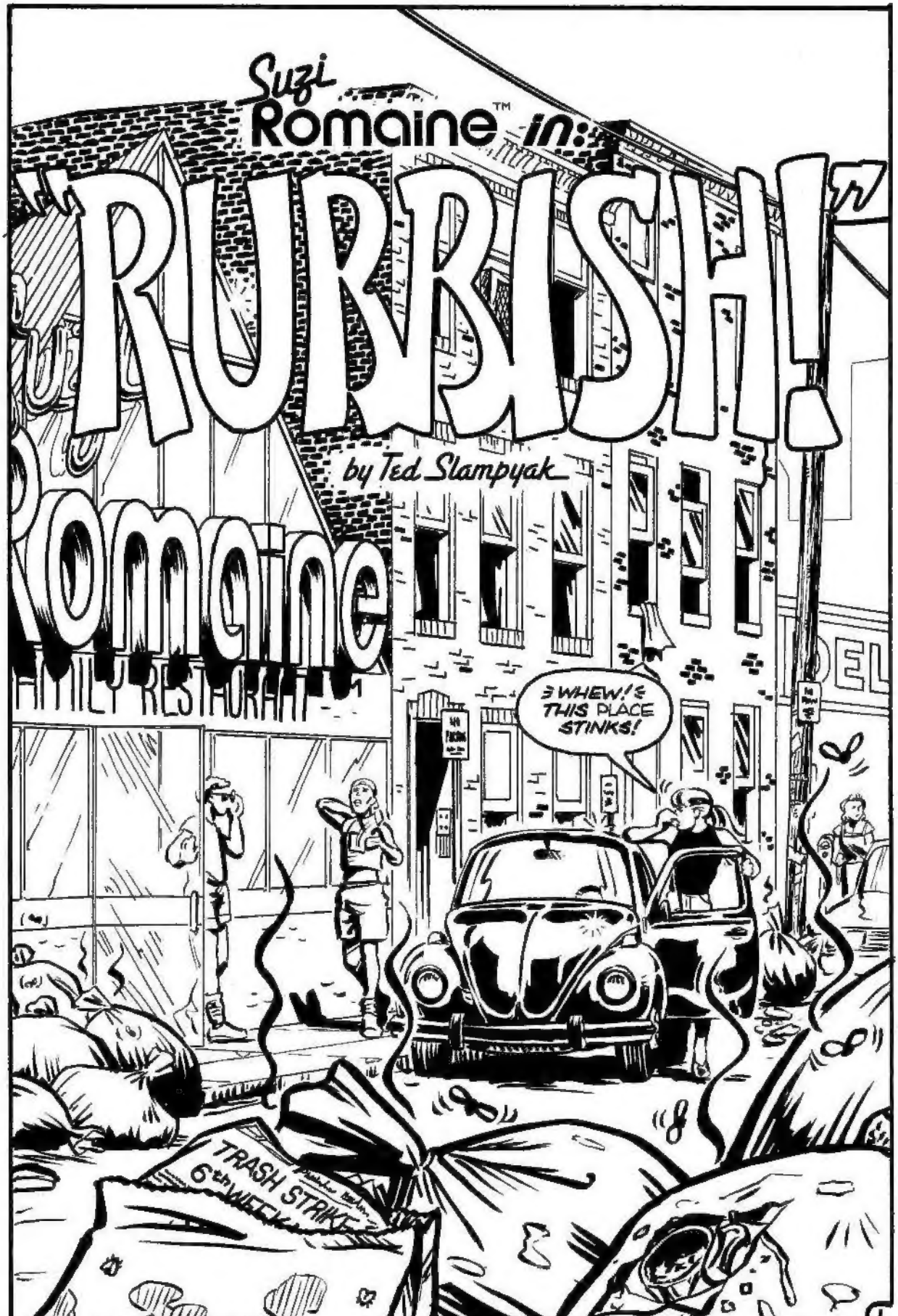
WHAT!? GOOD LORD NO!

DO YOU WANT TO TIE ME UP?

NO NO NO!.. I'M JUST TRYING TO MAKE A PHILOSOPHICAL POINT.

SO WHY ARE YOU SHOWING ME THIS **PORNOGRAPHIC SEXIST SHIT?!**

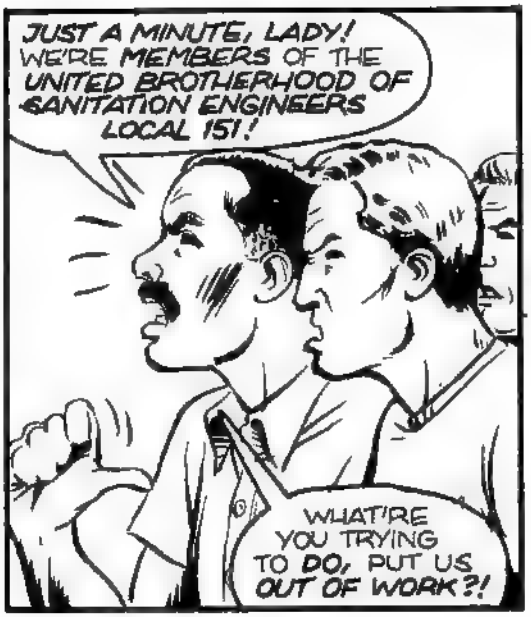
..YOU'RE DELIBERATELY MISSING THE POINT...



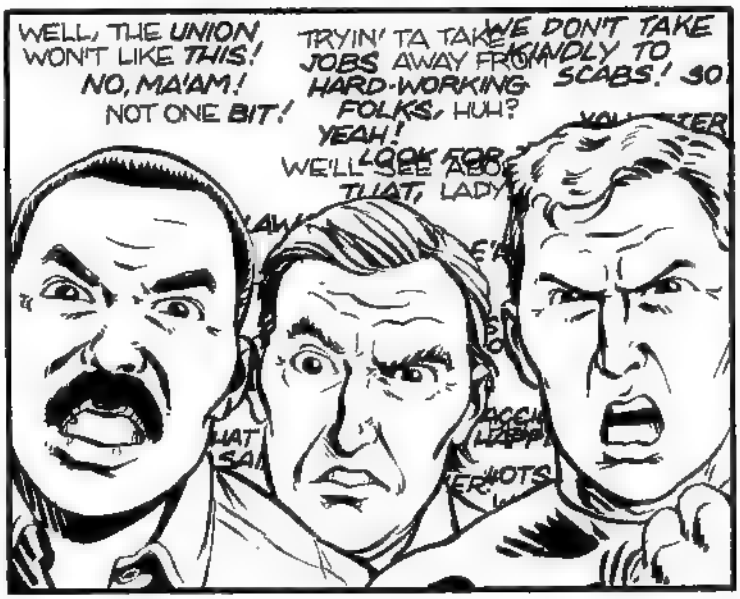
©1993 TED SLAMPYAK. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

LLOYD, THERE'S A MONTH'S WORTH OF GARBAGE OUT FRONT!
YOU KNOW I'M NOT GOING TO TOLERATE THAT!
Suzi Romaine™
WHAT'S GOING ON?
SANITATION STRIKE, SUZI. NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT!
YEAH, Ms. ROMAINE. LIKE, THE WHOLE CITY STINKS!
BEEN GOING ON ALMOST TWO MONTHS NOW!
WOW! SUZI ROMAINE!
YEP, AND UNTIL THE CITY GIVES IN, THAT TRASH'LL KEEP PILING UP!
USA
SAYS YOU!
LLOYD, CALL AROUND. FIND THE BEST DEALS ON TRUCK RENTAL AND A NEARBY LANDFILL.
WE'LL GET RID OF THIS RUBBISH OURSELVES!
GREAT IDEA!
HEY, CAN WE GET IN ON THIS?
HOLD IT...

...THE CITY CONTROLS SANITATION DISPOSAL!
SURE YOU CAN! WE'LL SPLIT THE COSTS, ACCORDING TO VOLUME!
AND I'LL TAKE A 10% MARK-UP TO COVER INITIAL INVESTMENT AND LABOR!
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME!


JUST A MINUTE, LADY! WE'RE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED BROTHERHOOD OF SANITATION ENGINEERS LOCAL 151!
WHAT'RE YOU TRYING TO DO, PUT US OUT OF WORK?!

PUT YOU OUT OF WORK?!
YOU'RE NOT WORKING NOW!

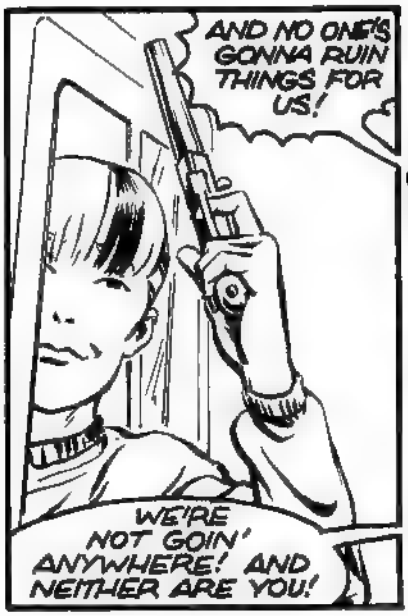

WELL, THE UNION WON'T LIKE THIS!
NO, MA'AM! NOT ONE BIT!
TRYIN' TA TAKE JOBS AWAY FROM HARD-WORKING FOLKS, HUH?
YEAH! WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT, LADY
WE DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO SCABS! SO

I'VE RESERVED A TRUCK, AND MADE A DEAL WITH A LOCAL LANDFILL!
GREAT!
OKAY, WHO'S IN?

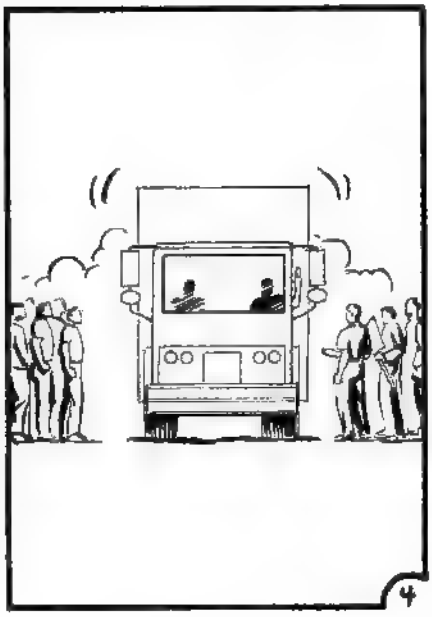
OKAY, WE'VE GOT ALL OF OUR TRASH LOADED IN.
YEAH.
WE'D BETTER GET STARTED. WE HAVE OVER 50 NAMES HERE!
YOU HAVE THE LIST, LLOYD?
GOOD THING TOO! THIS TRUCK COST US A FORTUNE!
UH OH. LOOK OUT.

ALL OF YOU, GET OUT OF MY WAY!
THIS GARBAGE IS MY GARBAGE, AND I'LL DO WHAT I WANT WITH IT!
WE'RE NOT MOVING!

STRIKE NOW!
ALL WORKERS MUST STAND UP FOR WHAT WE WANT!
WE'LL BRING THIS CITY TO ITS KNEES!

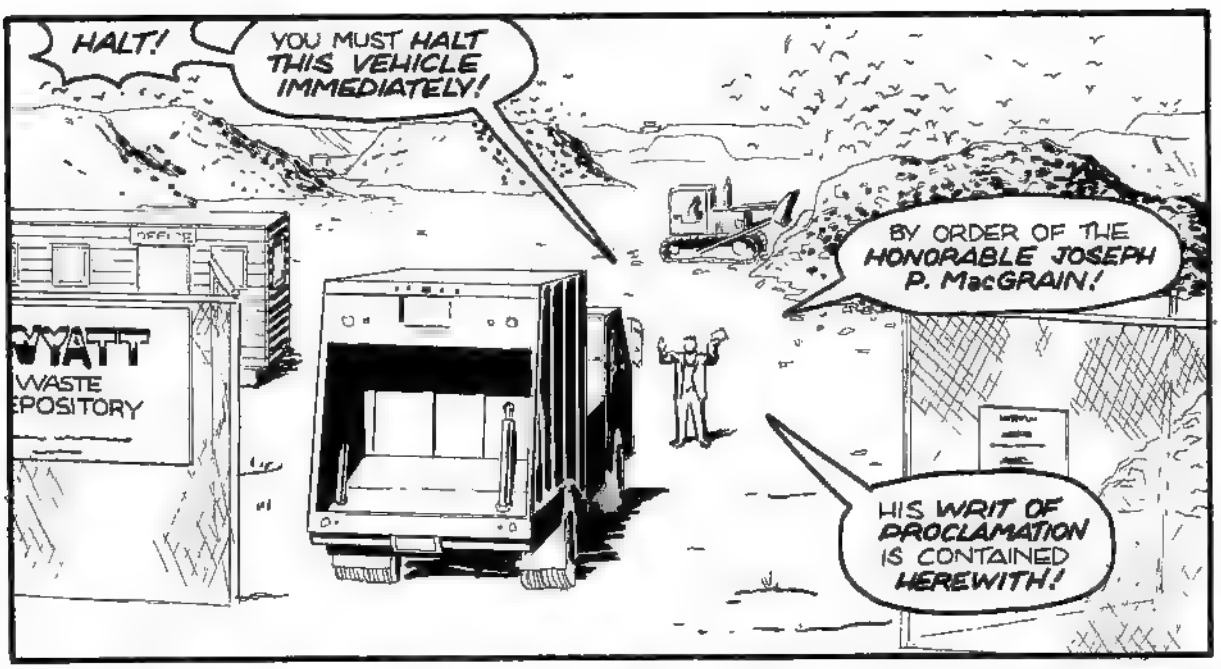

AND NO ONE'S GONNA RUIN THINGS FOR US!
WE'RE NOT GOIN' ANYWHERE! AND NEITHER ARE YOU!

STRIKE NOW!



SUZI! MY ARMS ARE GOING TO SNAP OFF, AND THIS HEAT IS KILLING ME!
I KNOW, BUT THIS IS THE LAST STOP!
GOOD!
THERE SHE IS!
C'MON! THIS TIME...
IF WE CAN'T SCARE HER AWAY, WE'LL BEAT HER AWAY!
YEAH!
GET OUTTA HERE, SCAB!
uh... SHE'S NOT GETTING OUT OF HERE, BILL.
SHE-- SHE CAUGHT IT!
"SHE'S... COMING THIS WAY, BILL."
"I NOTICED! ALL RIGHT, GET READY!"
C'MON, JAY! WE'LL TAKE 'ER OUT RIGHT NOW!
I'M READY, BILL!
5

EXCUSE ME...
ARE YOU TWO RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS?
THAT'S RIGHT! AND--
WHAM!
OKAY, NEXT STOP: LANDFILL!
HEY, LLOYD! LOOK WHAT SOMEONE GAVE ME— A BRICK!
6


HALT!
YOU MUST HALT THIS VEHICLE IMMEDIATELY!
BY ORDER OF THE HONORABLE JOSEPH P. MacGRAIN!
WYATT
WASTE
EPOSITORY
HIS WRIT OF PROCLAMATION IS CONTAINED HEREWITH!

"MAY THE LAW BE IN MY HEART, MIND AND SOUL, THAT I MAY READ ITS WORD."
IT READS AS FOLLOWS:

"...IS HEREBY ORDERED TO, CEASE FROM ALL SANITARY ACTIVITY, AND TO SURRENDER ALL SUCH REFUSE TO THE CITY...
BEEP BEEP BEEP

"...WHENCE IT SHALL BE RETURNED TO ITS POINTS OF ORIGIN. FURTHER, THAT SUZI ROMAINE IS HEREBY ORDERED TO, REFRAIN FROM ANY ACTIVITY--
BEEP BEEP BEEP

"--WHICH SHALL BE CONSTRUED AT A LATER DATE TO HAVE BEEN AGAINST THE WISHES OF THIS COURT--
BEEP BEEP
WHAT'S THAT N—

AAAAAAAAAAAAA

PTU! PTU!
AND TO THINK, I JUST GOT RID OF THE SMELL FROM MY LAST CASE!

SUZI, THANKS TO YOU WE NOT ONLY GOT RID OF OUR GARBAGE...
. BUT YOUR ACTIONS GOT THE UNION BACK TO THE TABLE, ENDING THE STRIKE!
YES, SUZI! I KNOW WE ALREADY PAID YOU, BUT HOW ELSE CAN WE THANK YOU?

THAT'S EASY!
NEVER GIVE IN TO AUTHORITY...
KEEP EATING AT SUZI ROMAINE™...
Suzi Romaine
...AND DON'T TELL 'EM WHICH WAY I WENT!
END

TRANQUILITY IN "The Big Date"
by Van Lente & Ellis
STOOD UP AGAIN! THAT'S THE FIFTH TIME THIS MONTH!
WHAT THE HELL? I MEAN, I'M REASONABLY ATTRACTIVE, FULL OF ANGST, AND I CARRY A BIG GUN...
WHAT MORE COULD ANY MAN WANT?
CHEER UP, TRANQUILITY! WHO CARES WHAT SOME STUPID BOY THINKS? YOU'VE GOT ME!
TIMBO
THANKS, RODNEY, BUT WHAT I NEED, YOU REALLY CAN'T PROVIDE--
UNLESS I DECIDE TO VIOLATE THE LAWS OF MATTER, THAT IS...
PARDON ME, MADAM, BUT THIS MATCHMAKING SERVICE USES THE MOST MODERN AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS TO LOCATE ONE'S PERFECT MATE.
IT BROUGHT MY WONDERFUL WIFE AND MYSELF TOGETHER--
--IT COULD DO THE SAME FOR YOU...
Narcissus Dating Agency
SECT. U LEVEL 4 16
DJ

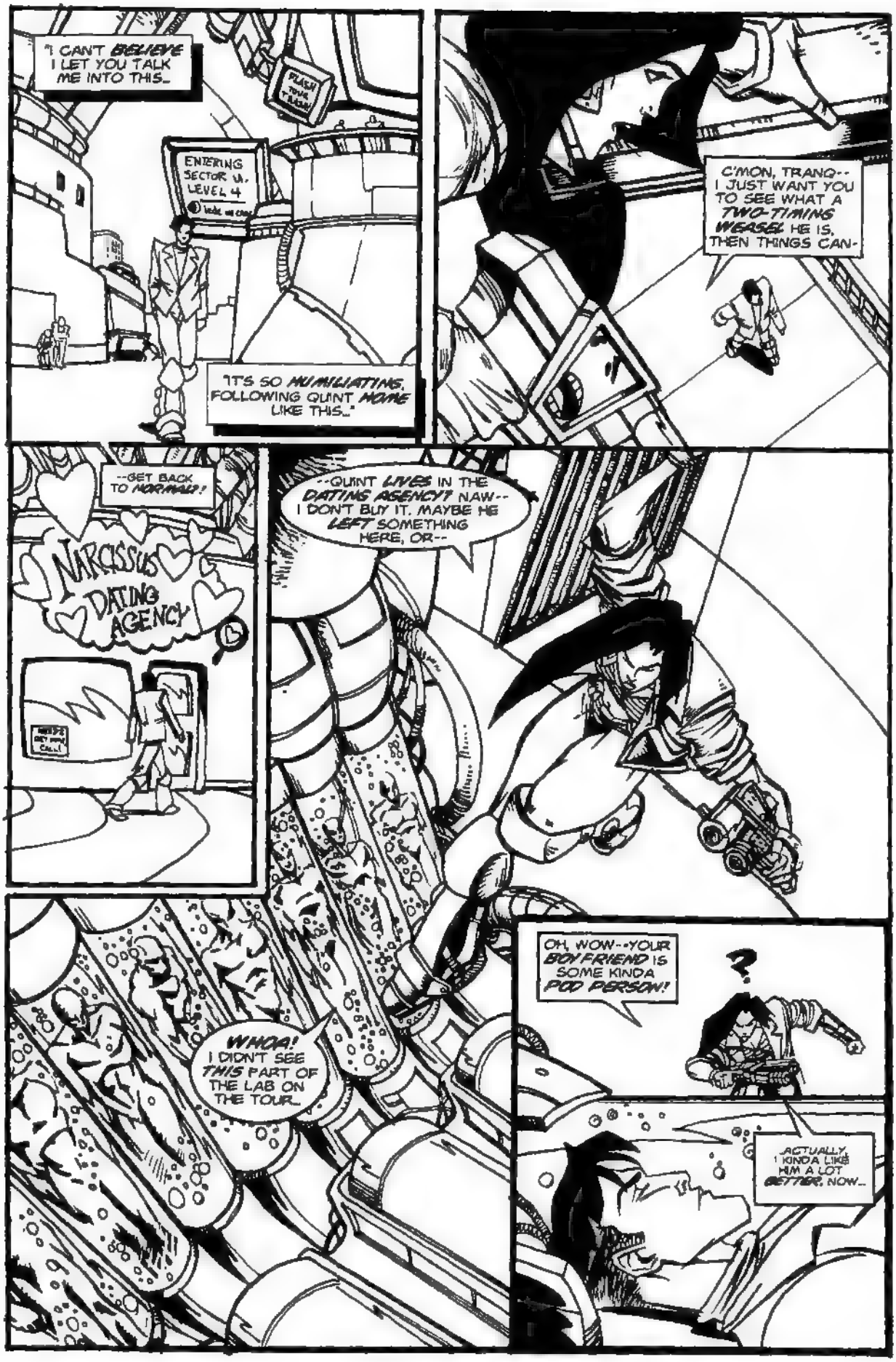
AND, SO...
Narcissus Dating Agency
HI! I, UH, MADE AN APPOINTMENT TO FIND A MAN--
ZTEP INTO DER LABORATORY, FRAULEIN...
?
HI! MY NAME IS, LIKE, TRANQUILITY, AND MY TURN-ONS ARE, LIKE, PARKING SPOTS REAL CLOSE TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE MALL--AND I LIKE...
...SIPPING CHABLIS ON MY PENTHOUSE BALCONY AS THE SUN SETS OVER THE SKY-LINE. IF YOUR IDEA OF A ROMANTIC EVENING FOR TWO IS--
--DEATH, PAIN, HOPELESSNESS. CALL ME. I WANT TO READ YOU SOME OF MY POETRY, THEN BREAK INTO A CRYING FIT FOR NO APPARENT REASON.
DER COM-PUTER VILL FIND YOU A MATCH IN TWO VEEKS, TOPS--
...GREAT...
...BY THEN I SHOULD BE ABLE TO EAT SOLID FOOD AGAIN...

TWO "VEEKS" PASS..
CUPID ÜBER ALLES, MEIN TRANQUILITY! VE HAFF FOUND YOU DER MAN UFF YOUR DREAMS!
OH, WOW-- IS HE SMART" CUTE?
DOES HE HAVE ALL HIS TEETH-?
HO-HO! ASK HIM YOURSELF-- HE VILL BE OVER IN UND HOUR..!
AN HOUR!?!
HEY! YOU SAID YOU'D CHAMOIS MY BARREL TONIGHT!!
59 MIN LATER..!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE GOING NUTS OVER SOME RANDOM GUY!!
IT'S GROSS! YOU'RE ALREADY DROOLING, AND YOU HAVEN'T EVEN MET HIM YET!
AAH, YOU'RE JUST JEALOUS--
I AM NOT JEALOUS!
WHEN YOU GET A BOYFRIEND, YOU TREAT ALL YOUR OTHER FRIENDS LIKE MISSING PERSONS--
RODNEY! STOP! DON'T YOU DARE SCREW UP THIS DATE--
"--LIKE YOU SCREWED UP THE LAST ONE!"
YOU TOUCH HER, YOU DIE..
3

Ding!
Dong!
ACK! HE'S HERE! NOW BE NICE TO THIS GUY--
BLEEP!
--OR I'LL SHOVE YOUR FIRING PIN WHERE THE SUN DON'T SHINE!
HI! I'M QUINT LYTIRA! YOU MUST BE...
...TRANQUILITY...
...HEHE NICE TO MEET YOU-- I, UH...
...DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO GET THE PLACE FIXED-UP ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE...
DON'T BE SO MODEST! I LOVE WHAT YOU'VE DONE WITH THE PLACE!
THE POST-HISTORIC ARCHITECTS OFTEN USED SMOKING BULLET HOLES IN THEIR APARTMENT DESIGNS...
YKNOW, SO FEW PEOPLE APPRECIATE THAT...
HEY!!!
THREE COURSES LATER...
THAT'S SO WEIRD, HOW YOU KNEW SYN STUFF WAS MY FAVORITE MEAL--
ACTUALLY, I GOT THE IDEA FROM THIS MOVIE I LIKE...

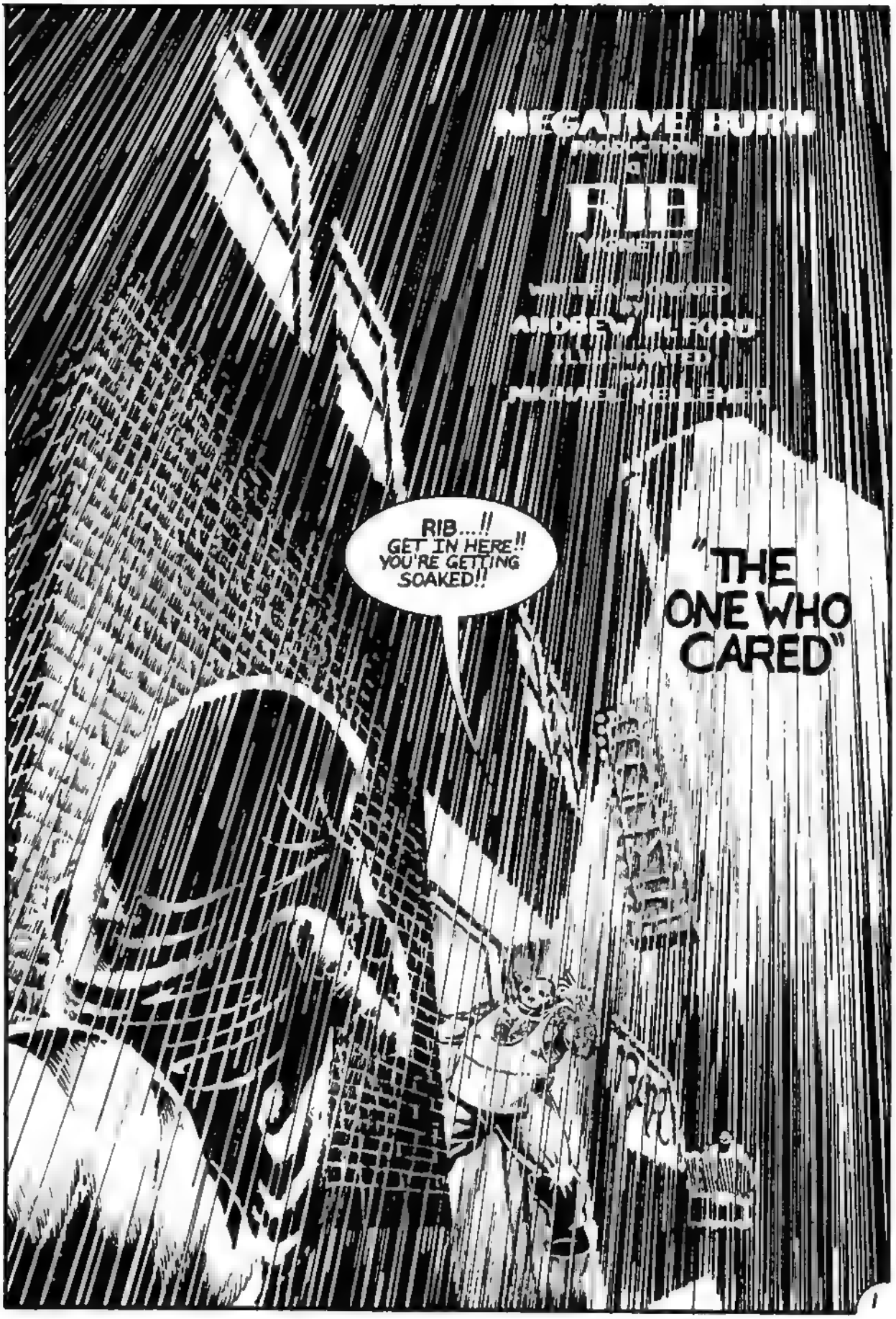
"SHATTERED HEART", Y'SEE, IN THE LAST SCENE, THE HEROINE IS DYING OF CONSUMPTION IN FRONT OF THE ILLEGITIMATE SON OF THE FATHER SHE NEVER KNEW SHE HAD--
YEAH, I SAW IT, TOO-- I... UH...
...I CRIED DURING THAT SCENE--
NO WAY! ME TOO--
WOW! IT'S SO RARE TO MEET A FELLOW CLOSETED BODICE-RIPPER FANATIC...
IT'S HARD TO ADMIT YOU'RE SO EASILY MANIPULATED BY HOLLYWOOD TRIPE...
I'LL DRINK TO THAT!
KLINK!
WE SHOULD WATCH "THE BLACKMOOR ROMANCES" TOGETHER SOMETIME--
WE SHOULD WATCH "THE BLACKMOOR ROMANCES" TOGETHER SOMETIME--
...I THINK I'M GONNA PUKE...

...I HOPE I'M NOT TAKING THINGS TOO FAST, BUT-- CAN I SEE YOU AGAIN, TRANQUILITY?
OH! SURE-- I'LL CALL YOU LATER THIS WEEK--
NO, I'LL CALL YOU!-- YOUR PLACE IS MUCH NICER THAN MINE. ALTHOUGH, NEXT TIME WE MEET...
...WE MIGHT END UP MESSING IT UP A LITTLE...
FINE BY ME... =SIGH=
OHMYGODOHMYGODOHMYGODOHMYGOD ELIKESMEHELIKESMEHELIKESMEHELIKESMEHELIKESME
THE WAITER WAS RIGHT!
--HE LIKES TO EAT WHAT I EAT, DO WHAT I DO--
QUINT IS PERFECT!
AW, STOP SPOOSING AND GET A CLUE! THE GUY DOESN'T WANT YOU TO CALL OR EVEN SEE HIS HOUSE!
THAT DOESN'T MEAN HE'S PERFECT--
--IT MEANS HE'S MARRIED!


I CAN'T BELIEVE I LET YOU TALK ME INTO THIS...
FLASH THIS FROM
ENTERING SECTOR 14, LEVEL 4
IT'S SO HUMILIATING, FOLLOWING QUINT MOANE LIKE THIS..."
C'MON, TRANQ-- I JUST WANT YOU TO SEE WHAT A TWO-TIMING WEASEL HE IS, THEN THINGS CAN-
--GET BACK TO NORMAL?!
NARCISSUS DATING AGENCY
--QUINT LIVES IN THE DATING AGENCY?! NAW-- I DON'T BUY IT. MAYBE HE LEFT SOMETHING HERE, OR--
WHOA! I DIDN'T SEE THIS PART OF THE LAB ON THE TOUR...
OH, WOW--YOUR BOYFRIEND IS SOME KINDA POD PERSON!
?
ACTUALLY, I KINDA LIKE HIM A LOT BETTER, NOW...

CLONE IST DER TECHNICAL TERM, MEIN PISTOL-- DER PERFECT MATE FOR YOUR MISTRESS, FOR HE HAS BEEN CREATED FROM HER GENETIC MATERIAL-
NOT QUINT-- NOT MY QUINT-
--AS FOUND IN DER BLOOD SAMPLE I TOOK DURING ZOSE PHONY "TESTS!"
MEIN FRAU, HERE, CHOSE YOU TO BE OUR GUINEA PIG-- AND NOW ZAT I KNOW MEIN PLAN VILL VORK-- I VILL FLOOD DER MOON MIT MY "MATES!"
MIT ALL DER SPOUSES ON DER COLONY UNDER MEIN MENTAL COMMAND, I VILL RULE DER MOON--
HOLD IT-- AS AN AGENT OF SEC-OP (AND BECAUSE YOU REALLY DISAPPOINTED ME) I GOTTA BRING YOU GUYS DOWN--
PING!
--ALTHOUGH WHY ANYONE WOULD WANT TO RULE THIS DUMP IS BEYOND ME--
PING!
PING!
PING!
OKAY, RODNEY-- YOU CONVINCED ME! A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND IS HER GUN!
SIGH! I LOVE HAPPY ENDINGS...!
SMACK!
The End

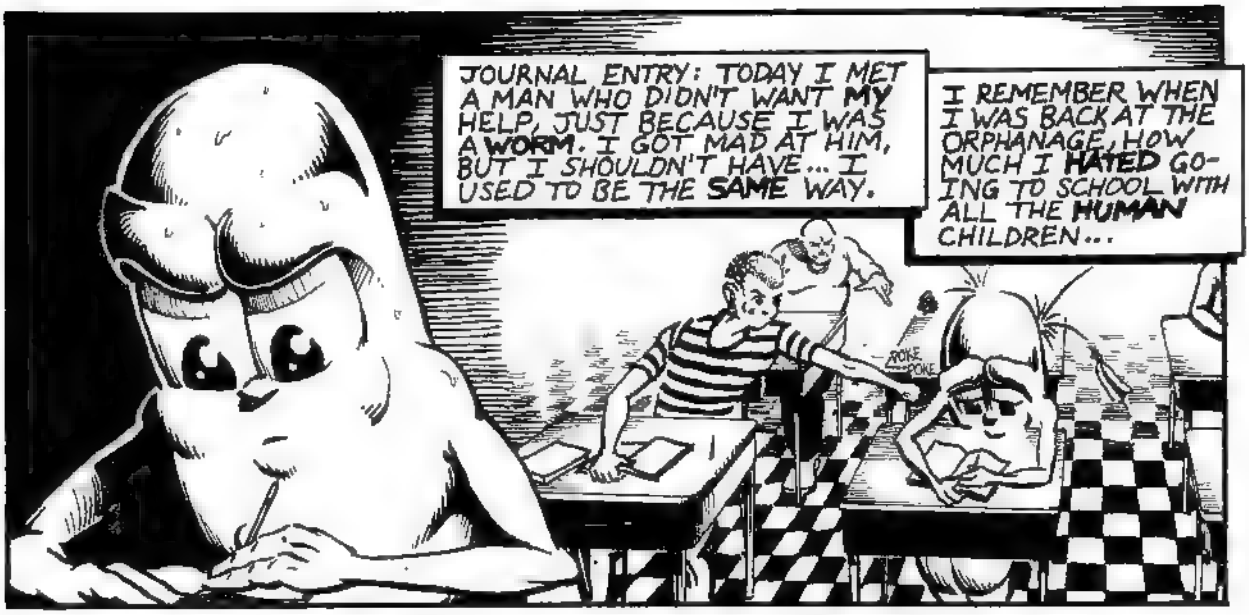
The Tale of the Six-Legged Octopi


NEGATIVE BURN
RIB
ANDREW WILFORD
"THE ONE WHO CARED"
RIB...!! GET IN HERE!! YOU'RE GETTING SOAKED!!

MAN.!! IT'S REALLY RAINING CATS AND DOGS OUT THERE!
WATCH OUT FOR FALLING DOBERMANS.
VERY FUNNY.
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK IN, MAX.
HEY!!
IT'S REALLY COMING DOWN, ISN'T IT? HERE, TAKE THIS. I'M ABOUT TO GO INSIDE SO I DONT NEED IT ANYW--
GET AWAY FROM ME, MAGGOT!!
2

LOOK, I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO LIKE ME. IT'S JUST THAT IT'S REALLY NASTY OUT HERE, AND IF YOU DON'T TAKE THIS JACKET AND FIND SOME KIND OF SHELTER...
...YOU'RE GONNA CATCH PNEUMONIA OR SOMETH!...
I'D RATHER CATCH PNEUMONIA THAN TAKE CHARITY FROM THE LIKES OF YOU!!
IT'S BAD ENOUGH WE GOTTA LIVE IN THE SAME CITY TOGETHER!
TOWN & LODG

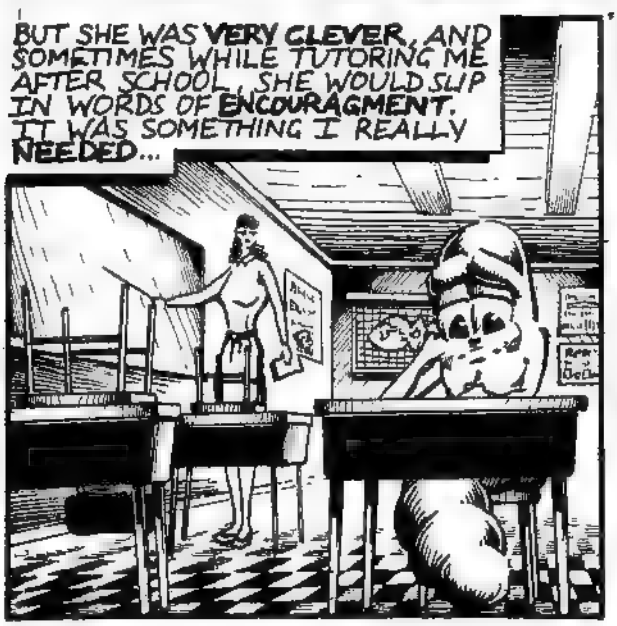
MAN, MAX, WHO WAS THAT?
OH, THAT WAS WILLY McKINNY. DON'T LET HIM GET TO YA. HIS FATHER WAS KILLED BY A WORM BACK DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF THE GREAT ASSIMILATION... AFTER THAT HE JUST KINDA GAVE UP ON LIFE.
NEEDLESS TO SAY, HE'S NOT REAL FOND OF YOUR PEOPLE. IT'S UNDER-STANDABLE.
HOW IS IT UNDER-STANDABLE?! I DIDN'T KILL HIS FATHER!
IT'S MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT, RIB. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN IT.
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, I'M JUST A LITTLE UPSET.


JOURNAL ENTRY: TODAY I MET A MAN WHO DIDN'T WANT MY HELP, JUST BECAUSE I WAS A WORM. I GOT MAD AT HIM, BUT I SHOULDN'T HAVE... I USED TO BE THE SAME WAY.
I REMEMBER WHEN I WAS BACK AT THE ORPHANAGE, HOW MUCH I HATED GOING TO SCHOOL WITH ALL THE HUMAN CHILDREN...
POKE POKE

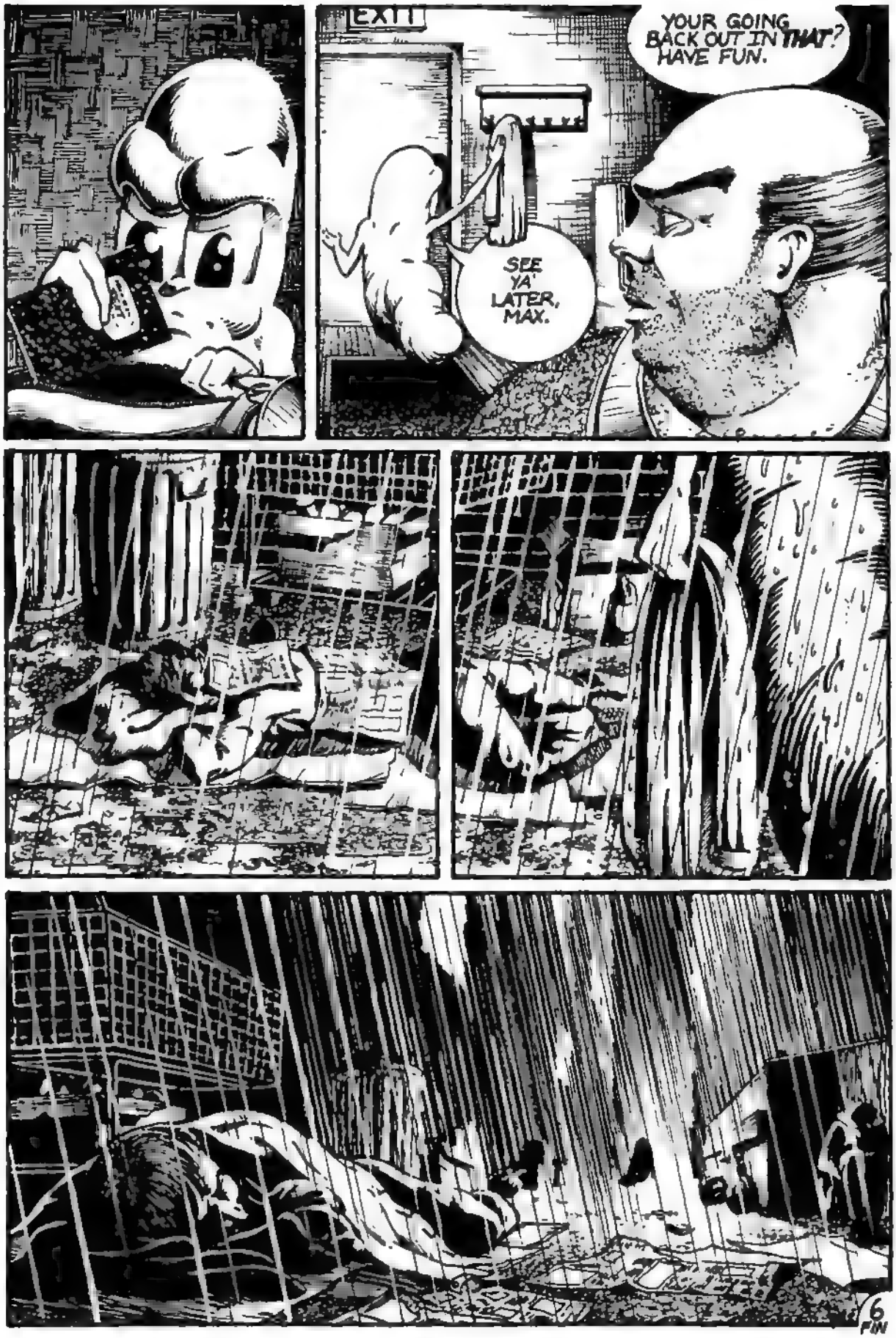
...ALL THEY WOULD EVER DO IS PICK ON ME... TEASE ME... ONCE ONE OF THE BOYS IN MY CLASS TOLD ME THAT HUMANS ARE BETTER THAN WORMS...

I BELIEVED HIM.
HA HA HA HA

SO WHEN ONE OF THE TEACHERS TRIED TO HELP ME, I IGNORED HER.

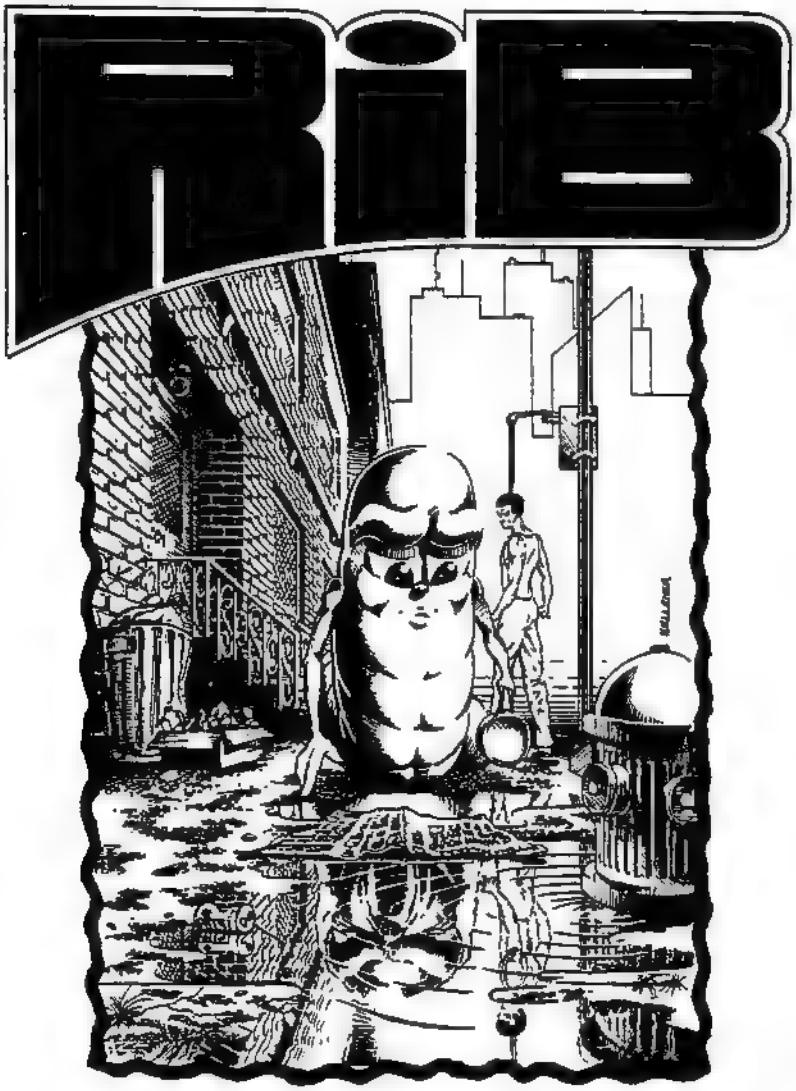

BUT SHE WAS VERY CLEVER, AND SOMETIMES WHILE TUTORING ME AFTER SCHOOL, SHE WOULD SLIP IN WORDS OF ENCOURAGMENT. IT WAS SOMETHING I REALLY NEEDED...

GREAT WORMS IN HISTORY
...EVEN THOUGH I THOUGHT I DIDN'T WANT IT.


EXIT
YOUR GOING BACK OUT IN THAT? HAVE FUN.
SEE YA' LATER, MAX.
6
FIN

"Resonant with echos of historical oppression and references to every-day questions of morality, it's no wonder *Rib* has been mentioned in the same breath as Art Spiegelman's landmark *Maus*."

Christopher Woodward
Overstreet's FAN



BY

ANDREW M. FORD & MICHAEL KELLEHER

BI-MONTHLY

FROM

bookmark

PRODUCTIONS

THE BUSY HOUR IN METROPOLIS - LUNCHTIME
... IN TWO WEEKS AND THEN OFF TO MADRID FOR ...
OH MY GOD! CAMBELL,WHATS WRONG ?
HUC
MEANWHILE. HIGH IN THE SKY!
SOMEBODY HELP, PLEASE, HE CAN'T BREATHE!
STAND CLEAR CITIZENS. HELP IS AT HAND.
A TALE OF ONE GOOD DEED BY
GRAEME NEIL REID
Choke!

...UH !
YES, MISS. PLEASE. STAND ASIDE.
THANK GOD YOU'RE HERE. WHAT WILL YOU TRY THE HEIMLICH MANOEUVRE?
NO.
I HANDLE THESE KIND OF SITUATIONS ALL THE TIME.
SMAK!
GET UP. YOU'RE ONLY MAKING THINGS HARDER FOR YOURSELF.
THIS SHOULD DO IT !
THANK YOU.
THINK NOTHING OF IT, SIR.
THE END

PART 3

THE IGNORANT LAYMAN

"THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS RUNS DEEP!"

© 1996 JASON THOMPSON & ADAM AIR

Ah! It is good to meet you! I am William Lyle, your soon-to be husband.
I DON'T THINK SOOo...
Oh, I think you will come to want me in time...
Isn't that right, Lucifuge?
YEAH, BOSS! SHE'LL BE TEARING YOUR CLOTHES OFF! ROWRR!
See? Lucifuge agrees with me.
Nebiros!
Take us to Morgost.
YOU KNOW THE DRILL.

Ah-- here we are-- Morgoat's Maleficent Marriage Ministry!
Hello, there, Morgoat! How art thou this fine day of matrimony?
JES FINE, JES FINE...
FOOM
JUST MARRIED
AS YA C'N SEE, PREPERATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR THIS MOST UNHOLY EVENT!
RONK RONK RONK RONK RONK RONK
Eh-- an alarm! Let me guess-- we have an uninvited guest?
DAT'S RIGHT, BILL! DON'T YA WORRY NONE, THOUGH-- MY GUYS'LL TAKE CARE'A DA BUM!
OOHH! THEY NEED SEAT BELTS FOR THOSE TRAVELLING INTERDIMENSION-ALLY! MA ACHIN' BACK!*
UNLEASH ALL MY BURNING WRATH-- POTENTIAL KILLING MACHINE-- TAKE DOWN ALL WHO BLOCK MY PATH-- ENJOYING ALL THAT'S OBSCENE... BORN OF FIRE!!
* VINNIE BARBARINO STYLE -- JOSHIN' JASON

HMMM... HE'LL BE NO MATCH FOR MY MAGIC GUMBALLS I OBTAINED IN MY BATTLE LAST YEAR WITH THE DEADLY MARTIAN FROM PLANET ZIGTHWINS.*
*DECENT COMICS #0-- JAVA JASE
GULP
HELLS 1/2 ACRE
POP
@*#$®?!
Y'KNOW, BILL-- I C'D TAKE THIS GUY OUT M'SELF, IF--
No. Only I can bring about the complete and utter defeat of this obviously hoppendipedous* foe! I shall be the victor, Morgoat!

UNHAND THE GIRL, YOU VILLAINOUS ROCKY MOUNTAIN OYSTER, YOU!
PETER?
OKAY, I'M GONNA HAVE TO GO JACK KIRBY ON YOUR ASS!! PREPARE THYSELF, DEMONIC DUNCE!
KRUTZ
DOH!
HAHAHA!
LISTEN, YOU DORKS-- YOU TOO, PETER-- I'M SICK OF ALL YOUR MACHO B.S.! I RESENT BEING USED AS BAIT IN YOUR STUPID LITTLE BATTLES! GO AWAY!!
ALL IS NOT LOST! I HAVE AN EXTRA PAIR OF B.V.D.s!
ZAPPP
HEE HEE HEE

WHY AM I SO "SPECIAL" TO MR. LYLE?
I THINK IT'S CUZ YOU'D BE GREAT IN DA SACK, BABEH!
ULP-- SHOULDA HAD A V-8!
FZZTT!
...And now, my Ignorant Layman-- It is time to taste my wrath!!
YEAH!
MMM... PEANUT BUTTER!
FOOM
FOOM

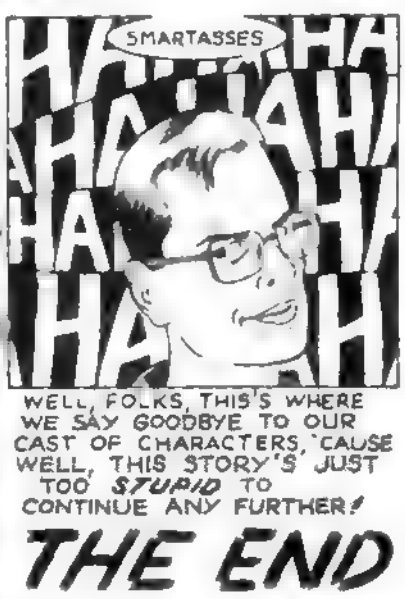
THOOM
SUFFERIN' SIZZLESTICKS! SHE'S... SHE'S CHANGING! GETTING BIGGER!
AAIIEEE
I'M SORRY I CALLED YOU A JERK, PETEY YOU AREN'T REALLY!
I KNOW!
POOL

...THE STAR WARS TRILOGY IN A BIG BOXED SET! I'M PLANNING ON INVITI-
WHAT IS THAT?!

W-WHY IT'S MY COMIC CHARACTER COME TO LIFE! AND-- AND--
DOESN'T SHE LOOK ALMOST EXACTLY LIKE LAURA PALMER?

SAY, I'VE GOT AN IDEA! WHAT SAY WE ALL GO AND GET A MALTED!?

I'VE GOT AN IDEA! WHAT SAY WE ALL GO AND GET A MALTED!?


SMARTASSES
HA HA HA HA HA HA
WELL, FOLKS, THIS'S WHERE WE SAY GOODBYE TO OUR CAST OF CHARACTERS, 'CAUSE WELL, THIS STORY'S JUST TOO STUPID TO CONTINUE ANY FURTHER!
THE END

MR. MURRAY IN APOCALYPSE SOON

dave taylor

Sponsored by the farmers of the world.
randy the skeleton© appears on this page.

CHARLIE TROUSERS, RANDY... IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GRIPPED IN SOME KIND OF NEGATIVE SPACE/TIME CONTINUUM! GEE!!
WELL, MR. MURRAY... YOU'RE THE BRAINS AROUND HERE! DO SOMETHING FOR THE LOVE OF GOD'S HOLY TROUSERS!
ER, GUYS... I DON'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT, BUT SOMETHING'S HURTLING TOWARDS US! DO WE STILL GOT THE COSMIC OVEN GLOVE?!
WHY NO... I DON'T THINK THAT WE DO ANYMORE...
I SEEM TO REMEMBER THAT WE HAD TO GIVE IT BACK TO JESUS THE LAST TIME WE WERE TEAMED UP TOGETHER*
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO IT, AIN'T IT SO?!
AND CORRECT ME IF I MISTAKE A FABRICATION OF THE TRUTH FOR THE TRUTH, BUT WASN'T IT ON LOAN? AND TAKING THIS INTO MIND,
SORRY... I'M INTERJECTING AGAIN, BUT I DO FEEL THAT WE SHOULD BE SHOWING SOME LEVEL OF CONCERN AT OUR PRESENT PREDICAMENT...
THAT'S RIGHT RANDY THE SKELETON, ONCE MORE I CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR IMPECCABLE PERCEPTION!!
ALLOW ME TO QUOTE DAVID B. REESE, TAMPA, OREGON... "TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO AT AGE EIGHT, I PICKED UP MY FIRST COMIC, AND WHILE I NO LONGER HAVE THAT ISSUE, THE IMPRESSION LIVES ON..."
MR. MURRAY... MY GOOD FRIEND CHUCK... AT THE RISK OF SOUNDING REPETITIVE... FORGIVE ME IF I REMIND YOU BOTH THAT, DESPITE BEING TOP-NOTCH CHAPS, YOU ARE STILL CAPABLE OF BEING UTTERLY DESTROYED!! WE, AND I MEAN WE IN THE SENSE THAT THE THREE OF US HAVE TO PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER IN A PRODUCTIVE WAY AND COME UP WITH A CHEAP BUT AFFECTIVE MEANS OF FINDING OURSELVES...
ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS EVER GROWING AND PROMISINGLY FATAL END!
RANDY, RANDY, RANDY... LET ME REMIND YOU THAT PREDOMINANTLY IN CASES SUCH AS THIS, ONE OF THOSE FINE FOLK FROM DIMENSION CARNEY... HAVING BEEN FREED BY BLACK ZOOM© WILL RISK HIS OWN LIFE TO COME TO THE AID OF FUN SEEKERS LIKE US! WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THE BEHEMOTH!
GENTLEMEN, FORGIVE MY IMPETUOUS NATURE! PLEASE OPEN YOUR HEARTS TO A HUMBLE AND LEGALY BINDING APOLOGY FROM ONE SLIGHTLY OVER-ZEALOUS COMPANION! - TAKE BACK MY FIRST STATEMENT FULLY... THERE IS NO DANGER!
GOOD!
STOP

* SEE #ONE OF INKLING.

"ISN'T THIS NICE, HONEY? JUST THE TWO OF US OUT HERE ALL ALONE?"
I TOLD YOU ONCE I GOT THE FIRE GOING IT WOULD BE WARM AND COZY IN HERE...
...AND ROMANTIC TOO, DON'T YOU THINK?
SO, YOU STILL WON'T TALK TO ME? LOOK, I ALREADY SAID THAT I WAS SORRY
I'D NEVER USED CHLOROFORM BEFORE I... WELL I DIDN'T MEAN TO BUST YOUR LIP.
SO YOU CAN JUST CUT ME SOME SLACK!
I MEAN, IT'S YOUR FAULT IT HAS TO BE THIS WAY.
IF YOU'D ONLY LISTENED TO REASON!
IF YOU'D ONLY BEEN WILLING TO FORGET ABOUT HIM!

OKAY..WAIT. YOU'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE ME LOSE MY TEMPER. WE'RE JUST GOING TO TALK THIS OUT AND YOU'LL SEE.
YOU'LL SEE THAT I'M RIGHT.
FOR YEARS YOU SEE, I'VE BEEN MAKING PLANS FOR US. OF ALL THE G RLS AT THE OFFICE, YOU WERE THE SPECIAL ONE. YOJ WERE ALWAYS SO POLITE WATCHED YOU..I NOTICED THINGS.
YOu HAD TO KNOW..YOU HAVE TO BJ.LD A RELATIONSH P CAREFULLY. THAT'S WHY I NEVER SPOKE TO YOU ABOUT US.
THE TIMING JUST WASN'T R GHT, AND TIMING'S VERY IMPORTANT. BJT YOJ HAD TO KNOW ABOUT US ANYWAY. YOU HAD TO FEEL IT YOURSELF
YET, YOU COME INTO WORK THE OTHER DAY WITH THAT RING ON YOUR FINGER.
HIS RING! AN ENGASEMENT RING!
HOW COULD YOJ DO THAT!? YOU MADE ME TALK TO YOU, BEFORE IT WAS TIME. I HAD TO REMIND YOU THAT WE WERE MEANT TO BE TOGETHER
BUT YOJ WOJLDN'T LISTEN TO ME.
YOU MADE ME TAKE MATTERS INTO MY OWN HANDS..MAKE YOu JNDERSTAND
YOU LOVE ME! NOT HIM, ME!
YOU KNOW THAT! I BROJGHT YOU HERE SO YOJ WOULD REMEMBER YOU BELONG TO ME!
YOU'RE CRAZY
2

CRAZY?
CRAZY!
IF YOU WON'T LET ME TALK
I'LL SQUEEZE HIM OUT!
KRAK
NO! NO, THIS ISN'T RIGHT! IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN THIS WAY. YOU CAN'T DO THIS. WHAT ABOUT US?
YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME, PLEASE!
I'VE SEEN THINGS LIKE THIS BEFORE. I'VE ONLY BEEN HERE FOR A SECOND, BUT I CAN PIECE THIS THING TOGETHER.
PLEASE

THE WOMAN KNEW THIS MAN. THE EXPRESSION ON HER FACE *TELLS* ME THAT, EVEN *TIED* TO THAT CHAIR SHE DIDN'T THINK HE WOULD *REALLY* HURT HER.
HE DIDN'T THINK HE WOULD EITHER. THE LITTLE *MAGGOT* DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS CAPABLE OF *HURTING* HER, OF *KILLING* HER.
BUT..HER *SURPRISE* AND HIS LACK OF *PREMEDITATION* DOESN'T MATTER. I CAN'T BRING HER BACK, EVEN IF I *DIDN'T* WANT TO AVENGE HER, I HAVE NO CHOICE.
I'M *COMPELLED*
STILL, EVEN WITHOUT THE COMPULSION, I'M GOING TO *ENJOY* THIS.
I'M GOING TO ENJOY MAKING HIM *PAY*.
WHO ARE YOU? *HOW* DID YOU GET IN HERE?

THE VICTIM

I WONDER WHAT DROVE THIS CRAZY LITTLE MAN TO THIS?
THIS IS OUR PRIVATE MOMENT. YOU HAVE TO LEAVE.
MAYBE SHE LEFT HIM FOR ANOTHER MAN. NO...NO THAT'S NOT IT. A WORM LIKE THIS COULD NEVER HAVE THIS WOMAN.
HHUUUNNHH
THAT'S IT. SHE WOULDN'T HAVE HIM, SO HE BROUGHT HER HERE.
UUGGHH
SHE STILL DIDN'T COOPERATE AND IT GOT OUT OF CONTROL. IT'S SO EASY TO LOSE CONTROL.
5
YES...THAT MAKES SENSE TO ME. HE THOUGHT PULLING THIS STUNT WOULD CHANGE HER MIND.
WHA... WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
STOP! PUT ME DOWN! YOU PUT ME...
PITIFUL REALLY.
...DOWWNNN'
I'M DOING HIM A FAVOR.

OHHH. YOU BROKE MY RIBS. I THINK YOU BRO...
NO! IT..CAN'T BE! WHAT ARE YOU?
VENGEANCE.
I FEEL THE FAMILIAR TINGLE BEGIN INSIDE MY HEAD.
I WISH I COULD DELAY IT. I WANT TO PLAY WITH HIM A WHILE LONGER.
THIS..THIS ISN'T HAPPENING. IT'S NOT HAPPENING.
BUT THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOJT IT. THE POWER IS BEYOND MY CONTROL. JUSTICE MUST BE DONE.

STILL...MY RELUCTANCE FADES QUICKLY. THERE'S *MUSIC* IN MY HEAD AND IT GROWS LOUDER. *JOY* FILLS ME AS THE POWER BUILDS TOWARDS ITS CLIMAX AND *BURSTS* FREE.
I'M STILL CONNECTED TO IT. I *KNOW* WHAT THE POWER KNOWS. I'LL SENSE *EVERYTHING* IT DOES TO HIM.
STAY AWAY! I DIDN'T *MEAN* TO *HURT* YOU. I *LOVE* YOU!
IT WILL *PAY* HIM BACK FOR WHAT HE DID TO HER. HE'LL FEEL *ALL* THE *PAIN* HE CAUSED.
HIS LIP *SWELLS* AS HE FEELS A RAG *WET* WITH CHLOROFORM *SMASH* INTO HIS FACE. ROPES *DIG* INTO HIS ARMS AND LEGS AS HANDS *CLUTCH* HIS NECK AND *SQUEEZE*.
7
THEN THERE'S THE PAIN HE'S BROUGHT TO OTHERS. HE FEELS THE *ANGUISH* OF HER FAMILY, HER FIANCEE, AS THEY LEARN OF HER *SENSELESS* DEATH.
HE FEELS THEIR *GRIEF* AS THEY STAND AT HER GRAVE.
THEN MY CONNECTION TO THE POWER IS *SEVERED*. IT HAS TAKEN HIM SOMEWHERE *BEYOND* MY PERCEPTION.
THE MUSIC FADES.

I'M FINISHED HERE.
BUT THE GIRL HOLDS ME. SHE'S...FAMILIAR TO ME.
EVEN WHEN I SAW HER FACE IN THE MIRROR HOURS AGO, I WAS REMINDED OF MY WIFE. THE WAY SHE LOOKED AT ME WHEN WE FIRST MET.
I REMEMBER HOW BEAUTIFUL SHE WAS THEN...SO LONG AGO. BEFORE THE POWER CAME.
HAS IT REALLY BEEN FIFTY YEARS SINCE I LAST SAW HER? WONDER IF SHE'S STILL ALIVE? NO!
I WON'T ALLOW MYSELF TO THINK ABOUT SUCH THINGS. I'M BEYOND SUCH THINGS NOW
THERE'S A NEW FACE...A MAN'S FACE IN THE MIRROR NOW. HE'LL BE MURDERED SOON. I CAN'T PREVENT IT.
BUT I'LL BE DRAWN TO HIS KILLER AND I'LL AVENGE HIM. JUST AS I'VE DONE FOR THE THOUSANDS OF FACES I'VE WORN SINCE I ACCEPTED THE POWER.
JUST AS I'LL DO UNTIL THE POWER IS PASSED ON
AFTER ALL, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE VICTIMS.

THE MEANING OF LIFE
©1996 Stephen Cheng
KNOCK! KNOCK!
WHO IS IT?
MY NAME IS TIMMY..
GO AWAY, TIMMY.
WAIT! PLEASE! I'VE TRAVELLED MANY MILES AND MANY MOONS TO SPEAK WITH YOU, WISE HERMIT.
WHAT DO YOU WANT, TIMMY?
I WANT TO KNOW THE MEANING OF LIFE.
YOU DON'T, TIMMY. TRUST ME.
PLEASE, WISE HERMIT. I NEED TO KNOW WHAT LIFE IS!
I CAN'T HELP YOU. I'M SORRY.
NO! WAIT!
I'M NOT LEAVING UNTIL YOU TELL ME!
SIGH..

THANK YOU. I WILL TELL IT ONCE, THEN YOU MUST LEAVE.
SOME DECCRIBE LIFE MERELY AS THE SPAN BETWEEN BIRTH AND DEATH.
OTHERS DEFINE LIFE AS THAT CONDITION OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS IN WHICH THEY EXERCISE FUNCTIONAL POWERS..
PERSONALLY, I THINK LIFE IS A REALLY BIG DICTIONARY.
YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?

I COULD HAVE STAYED AT HOME AND DONE BETTER WITH A FORTUNE COOKIE!
BOY, YOU'RE NOT WISE AT ALL!
AM, TOO!
WISE ASS, MAYBE. I BET THE REAL WISE HERMIT LIVES ONE FOREST DOWN.
I AM THE WISE HERMIT!
PROVE IT.
FINE. YOU WANT TO KNOW THE MEANING OF LIFE?
LIFE HAS NO MEANING! LIFE'S A BITCH AND THEN YOU DIE!
SATISFIED?
YOU'RE LYING
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU. YOU'RE A LIAR.
I WISH IT WAS A LIE.
YOU CAN HIDE IN THE FOREST AND BELIEVE THAT CRAP IF YOU WANT. BUT LIFE HAS A MEANING, AND I'M GOING TO FIND IT!

I'M GOING TO FIND THE MEANING OF LIFE EVEN IF IT KILLS ME!
TIMMY, WAIT!
BLAM!
OOPS..
GEEZ. WHAT KIND OF IDIOT GOES FRANCING ABOUT A FOREST DURING HUNTING SEASON?
SIGH..

BEDROCK BLUES
COLLINS * HODGES
MAIN STREET. WHERE ANCIENT AND NEW LEAN SIDE-BY-SIDE, 'DON'T WALK' FLASHING ON PEELING PAINT.
SAVE
THE GREAT CLOCK LAUGHS OFF-KEY BECAUSE YOU DOESN'T WINDS IT UP..
YOU SHOOTS IT!
Yabba Dabba Doo!

THE BANK UNLOCKS IT'S DOORS.
NCNB
12
3
6
9
THE KID WAS KILLING CRAZY. DRUNK OR FLYING ON SOMETHING.
OR BOTH.
FOR SEVENTY-NINE CENT AND A RUBBER BAND...
HE NOW WORE THE FACE OF FRED FLINTSTONE.
We'll have a gay ol' time.
NINE O'CLOCK!
TIME TO MAKE A WITHDRAWAL!
WELCOME
OPEN HOURS
9:00 - 2:00
9:00 - 2:00

THE CLOCK CHIMES ONCE AS FRED STUMBLES IN.
WELCOME
—who's the funny man with Flintstones face and junkie eyes—
ZEB LUCUS:
TWENTY-SEVEN BORED YEARS OLD,
GUARDS THE PUBLIC TRUST.
TRYING TO SCORE WITH TAMELA THE TELLER
BUT THE BITCH IS TOO STUCK UP TO NOTICE.
HALF ASLEEP, AND NOW—
SURPRISE!
QUICKLY REACHES FOR HIS VIRGIN PISTOL.
LUCUS
WAVE AT THE CAMERA!
12
9
3
6
BEAT THE CLOCK.
3

TAMELA SCREAMS.
PUSHES THE GADGET UNDERFOOT...
AND THE BELLS RING, RING, RING.
HANDS SHAKING FRED FIRES ONCE—
—TWICE—
— AND TIME FREEZES.
THEN, ZEB WAKES UP.
That FRED, always shooting off his mouth.
Back to the Stone Age.

Internet: 72164.1134@CompuServe P.O. Box 893 Acworth,GA 30101

Andrew Kaplan
AKaplan961@aol.com

Having read Negative Burn almost from the beginning, I feel a little nervous about this, my first letter to you. Almost every letter you print seems to comment on every story, and I'm not sure if I have something particularly insightful to say on each and every piece this month. Still, I don't want to leave anybody out, so I'll do my best.

It took me a couple of minutes to place Jeff Parker's name, but I finally remembered being impressed by his work on SOLITAIRE with Gerard Jones. I'm much more impressed here. Not only does his art show a great deal of development for the better, but he turns out to be an excellent writer. There seemed to be a certain Al Williamson influence in his inking, while the story reminded me of both the EC science fiction stories, and B. C. Boyer's HILLY ROSE. Is this the prelude to a series? I hope so.

As always, "Mr. Mamoulian" was hysterical, as well as poignant. New Brian Bolland art, except for covers, may be rare indeed, but his older stuff certainly holds up. Hopefully, when you've printed them all, we'll see a collection, all in one place.

I've been a fan of BOONDOOGLE from the first issue, so I expected to enjoy the gang's appearance here. Needless to say, I wasn't disappointed. This is one of those slice-of-life series that should appeal to the cynical, all-life-must-suck-happy-people-must-be-artificial-shallow-and-stupid-and-they-suck segment of the comics reading audience. I'm not sure I'm that bitter, and I like it too. I hope it does real well under the Tapestry imprint.

"No Regrets" ended on a perfectly ambiguous note. Been a fan of Jeff's work since THROUGH THE HABITRAILS, and I look forward to anything he does. Hope to see him back in these pages soon.

"Mister Drawing Board Belly" was just charming. A wonderful tribute to all the comics artists throughout history who put out pages of good, solid work every day, without ever becoming superstars. The whole thing even looked like it was composed of clip art. More, please!

"Cascade: I Only Have Eyes for You," despite the fantasy setting, was beautifully human. Thanks to this story, I'm planning on buying the first issue of FEVER PITCH. Please continue with the previews.

When DOORMAN first came out, I looked through it at my local store. I decided against buying it, since I think the art seemed uneven or something, and I didn't know anything about the creators, and the story didn't particularly seem to appeal to me, and a lot of other comics probably came out that week, and. . . Anyway, at least now I feel like I can make an informed choice, instead of a gut-level one. I liked this story, for the same reasons I like the "Kilroy" or "Apparition" shorts you've published. They all seem kind of like modern spins on the "Phantom Stranger" formula — which means if DC ever does bring back the Phantom Stranger, they'll have to find a new slant for him. I still don't think I'd buy a DOORMAN comic, but that has a lot to do with Mike Leonard's recent letter to FAN, decrying PREACHER because it doesn't tell the kind of story he likes, and recommending that folks read comics with good, Christian values, like DOORMAN. His right to an opinion meets my right to disagree, and there's only so many comics I can buy.

"What's Wrong With the World Today" was one of the best editorial cartoons I've seen in a while.

"Life Imitates Art" felt kinda DRAWN & QUARTERLY. I keep reading how DARK HORSE PRESENTS has lost its way, I guess because it's presenting less mainstream stories these days. I'm not sure I'd agree with that, but it's not an accusation you guys have to worry about much. Your package has always been so eclectic, I'm not sure you have a definable "way" to "lose." I enjoyed this story, as well.

"Wolf" was the thought-provoker for this issue. It was handled with tact and subtlety, which was much appreciated. The final caption smacked me in the face with a harsh dose of reality. Sometimes I fear for the direction my species has taken.

"This is a Recurring Dream" may be one of Ken Meyer's most controlled pen-and-ink jobs. Dream comics have become hot, thanks to Rick Veitch, and they're usually fun to read, if the artist manages to capture the weird dream logic without seeming disjointed or confused. That certainly didn't happen here.

"Narrative in Reverse": The perfect final story. What more could anyone want?

There. Did my best. Not sure I can manage to do this sort of thing every month, but I just wanted you to know how much I appreciate the package you present every month. I get an eclectic collection of styles, introductions to new series I might not

otherwise have read, and vignettes from current favorites, like SHADES OF GRAY, BOONDOOGLE, and the adventures of ROB HAINES. Please convey my appreciation to everyone involved in this issue, and let Jeff Parker know that he's definitely got a customer if I chooses to continue the adventures of "Volt 2000."

You want new Brian Bolland artwork, well, starting with issue #45 all the "Mr. Mamoulian" strips will be brand new. He's finishing up a batch of new ones and they're making their way across the Atlantic to me. Hope you enjoy them. I'm interested in seeing how much they've changed since the last ones he did a number of years ago.

Jeff Parker DOES plan on continuing the adventures of VOLT 2000 in the not-too-distant-future. I'll try to let you know when plans become more firm.

Thanks for writing in, Andrew, and PLEASE keep those letters coming. You don't have to review every story in each issue. Just drop us a line and let us know what you think about any one story or the issue in general. What do you want to see? What don't you want to see?

Edward Douglas
76453.767@compuserve.com

Hey, Joe!

Since NEGATIVE BURN #38 comes out this week, I better get my ass in gear and read some of these issues which have been piling up.

First up, NEGATIVE BURN #36. Starting off with a Jeff Parker cover and the first appearance of his character, Vanessa Volt! I missed Jeff in San Diego, but heard good things about his new series from friends who ran into him there. Now, I absolutely love stories about time travel and time-displaced travelers so this already has a lot going for it, but it also has a great premise and some great characters in Vanessa and Dr. Volt. The theories of these two were a bit too cerebral to follow, but I like the fact that Jeff has reasoned out how the historical figures can be showing up in the present. I really enjoy Jeff's new art style; that and the strong female character puts this into similar territory as BC Boyer's HILLY ROSE (another great series)—definitely good company to be keeping.

Poor Mr. Mamoulian. He just can't get a break with the ladies, huh?

Next up is a preview of the new Caliber/Tapestry series "Boondoggle". Now, I ran into Steve at last year's Mid-Ohio Con and bought a copy of his Knight Press series to review for my fanzine. I wasn't that impressed and it wasn't my cup of tea, and it probably still isn't. It ends up coming across as Evan Dorkin does BLOOM COUNTY for the MTV set, and while there is no real story that I can find, it tries too hard to be "hip" which immediately makes it lose credibility for me. I also don't like the lettering technique used either and this is just too much like a comic strip to work in comic book form. This "story" could have done in two to three pages, I'm sure. Maybe I'm just getting old...

"No Regrets" also comes to its logical conclusion this issue as Kenny Silvers' depressing story comes to an end. I'm still not sure if I understand all of the "Dreaming" stuff, but this one seems like it deserves re-reading all in one sitting. I really liked the premise of this series and I'm glad that things worked out for the rest of the band, if not for Kenny himself. The art in this installment was even worse than the last one, though. What happened to everyone's mouth?

The ever-present Paul Fricke is joined by Dandy Don Simpson for "Mr. Drawing Board Belly" which was a unique look at the life of an old-time comics artist. While it seemed to come across as a story done strictly for fun that last panel gave the whole thing a bit of a daunting edge. Man...I wonder what dark corner of their minds this came from?

Brian Clopper's "Fever Pitch" was a pretty neat story. I loved the concept of a school for demons and having a basilisk as a main character is an interesting twist to the "school life" type comic books that seem to be cropping up more regularly. I only wish that I read this earlier so that I could have ordered the first issue in November. D'oh! (I guess I'll have to try to track down Brian at a con somewhere.) I thought the artwork in this story looked a bit scratchy and rushed though, and I hope that won't be the case when BOMBASTIC debuts.

Great to see another "Door Man" story being done for Caliber before its move to other pastures. I like the concept, but I'm a bit worried that it might get a bit formulaic, especially in this case, where there isn't enough space to tell the sort of complex story that Mike Leonard excels at. I mean, really...all this over some penny candy shoplifting? This wasn't really some of James' most interesting artwork either. Oh, well.

Jim Mahfood's strip has already been done. I can't remember if I saw it on MTV or in an animation festival, but there was an animated short which had the exact same "premise". (This is also the type of stuff that Evan Dorkin does all the time...only better.)

Oh no!! It's Jeff DeMos! Now, don't get me wrong, I'm sure he's a nice guy, but that name has been following me everywhere I go! See, he lives a few blocks up from me, and he also lives in Apt. #13, and he also used to write a lot of letters to Vertigo, but no, we're not the same person. Except that there's this guy on AOL who thinks we are and won't stop hounding me and calling me "Jeff"! And now, he has a story in NEGATIVE BURN, and I'd like to do a story or two for NEGATIVE BURN, and ....well, you get the picture.(Maybe I'll

even meet this guy one day...don't know what I'd say. Probably, "So you're Jeff Demos..." Anyway, his "Life Imitates Art" (oops...I've written a song with that title, too <G>) is next and it's obvious that Jeff lives in the East Village, as this seems to be a common enough story about that area of NY (there are actually statues like that there). The story itself is nothing that fantastic and probably one of the more pointless ones of the issue (Sorry, Jeff!) and I didn't like the artwork much either.

"Wolf" by Jim Alexander (okay..the name sounds familiar...what has he done before?) Storn Cook & Dan Berger (those names sound familiar, too!) follows and is a well-written story about the history of wolves in Wyoming. This was rather informative, but not really my cup of tea, and the art seems to fall into a similar style that a lot of Caliber's books are using these days.

Alright! Another dream sequence from the warped REM's of Ken Meyer Jr.! This one was just a bit too strange for me, though. (Maybe Ken should let his food digest before going to sleep? <G>?

"Humanity in Extremis" seemed like a good ending for the issue...but that's all that it seemed good for. (Was there a point to this that I missed?)

My favorite part of this issue was the "Volt 2000" story...easily...and I can't wait to see the characters return in GREAT DIVIDE. Likewise, CASCADE was a great start for what could become an interesting series. I also liked "Mr. Drawing Board Belly" and "Door Man" but neither were as mind-blowing as other work I've seen from those guys. Hmm... This issue seemed to be the Preview issue as most of the comics in it were previews of upcoming series. Not that I mind, really.

That's funny, when Jeff DeMos saw your name in the NB letters pages he said, "Oh no! It's Edward Douglas! He's everywhere!" (I'm just kidding.)

Olav Beemer
Zeist, The Netherlands

Dear Joe,

Quite the weird issue— that surely is the most suitable way to describe NEGATIVE BURN #36. Weird, in that a lot of the storytelling presented in the different features was the same, and unfortunately, in this case "the same" means rather uneventful and hardly entertaining.

For instance, "Volt 2000" had all the potential to be one incredible kind of tale only because of its highly interesting story premises. On top of that, Jeff Parker's artwork was fresh and inspiring, but somehow his story and especially the technique of storytelling used in this tale has been anything but inspiring. The first part of the tale has to explain way too much in captions, causing a huge break compared to the second half of it, where the gears shift up. Together with an ending which didn't do any of the aforementioned potential any justice, this has been a true let-down.

I had the same problem with "Boondoggle." Despite the fact that I really adore Steve Stegelin's wonderful style of artwork and his very entertaining way of working with different lay-outs, the story lacked both beginning and end, as well as a point and a real plot. The artificial look of the lettering didn't help in that department either, making it rather uninviting to read the story at all.

"Fever Pitch: Cascade" was another totally disappointing feature, as Brian Clopper's tale remained incredibly superficial. When a writer has to resort to the use of many captions giving voice to the inner feelings of the main character, and especially when every single bit of character development occurs only in these captions, something is very wrong indeed. Yet such was the fate of this story, and not even the somewhat ironic ending could make me change my mind about it.

"Life Imitates Art," too, didn't live up to the usual level of high quality in these pages. With hardly any true graphic storytelling and panel-to-panel continuity to speak of and with another story filled with mostly captions, it simply failed to grasp my interest and hold it from beginning to ending. Sometimes, writing a tale with captions only can be a truly rewarding experience, but for some writers, it's simply a way to cover up their inexperience, trying to tell the story in their own first-person through the captions without having to give substance to one of the characters in the story. Usually, those attempts fail miserably, and I'm sorry to inform you: so did Jeff DeMos'.

So with four out of twelve features which were in no way of any interest to me and with two or three others which didn't really come close to being my particular cup of tea, NEGATIVE BURN #36 wasn't one of the best issues in the past year. Don't get me wrong, the other features were very good, some even brilliant, but the overall feeling was less positive than usual. Hopefully, this was a one-time incident and hopefully, future issues will be more to my liking than the one at hand here.

Gelb D. Boon
via the Internet

Joe,

#36 was the best issue in a long time.

My apologies to Jeff Nicholson for cutting his story short (I thought it ended in #35!). The installment in this issue, however, was a well done final chapter. It provided good closure without losing much of the mystery & wonder of the previous chapters.

"Volt 2000" was entertaining and well done. It's another one of those stories that just scratches the surface as an introduction of things that are in progress elsewhere

(self-published or published elsewhere?) or of things to come (preview of an upcoming project?). Which leads to this thought: It would be harder for you, Joe, but what about short bios of what the contributing creators are up to elsewhere? For instance, I didn't know Hester did SWAMP THING for a long time after I saw his work in NB. Of course, I'm a little more 'clueless' than some other of your readers might be.

Okay—"Boondoggle"—It's funny how people can get away with being crude when funny animals are replacing the people. It's a good escape, but just imagine for a second if this story was realistically drawn with 17 year olds in the starring roles. Best wishes for the Tapestry line—hopefully there will be more hidden social commentary in these seemingly humorous books. (Lighten up, Gelb!- Gelb)

"Mr Drawing Board Belly"! Sure was funny. I think I do own some of his books. Fricke's getting better & better each issue. I'm just glad I'm not a funny book artist.

I was also taken with "Cascade." It was a decent story well drawn and original. Maybe I'll follow it up with a purchase of "Fever Pitch." Good work, Brian.

"Doorman," well I'm prejudiced towards this because of good ol' Mike Leonard. So I won't say too much. "Stolen Years" serves well to introduce the Doorman character and showcase good storytelling. Too bad the Arcanum got it in the end, she was pretty likable. And so was the relationship between Agnes and her Arcanum.

Jim Mahfood's "What's Wrong..." - Love.

"Life Imitates Art." A perfect story.

"Wolf." I learnt somethin'. And it's not often you can still enjoy a story after that. (I'm joking). Finding out who Leo Cottenoir was and what he did brought it all together.

To tell the truth, Ken Meyer's pieces have become really hit or miss lately. "This is a Reoccurring Dream" was pretty good though. Is that a Black Flag T Shirt he's wearing?

I would love to have little short bios of all the creators listed each issue, Gelb—in fact, I originally planned on doing so—but then the realities hit me about how hard it would be to do so on a monthly basis, especially with all the different creators I use in each issue, that I decided that I just couldn't find the time to do the research necessary. I hope the quality of the series will allow you to forgive me for this slight.

Debra Hockey
Norwich, Norfolk
United Kingdom

Dear Joe,

I have no idea how you do it, but I'm glad you do; NEGATIVE BURN continues to be one of the highest quality anthologies around and in an industry with anthology monthlies coming out of it's ears, that's pretty impressive.

Do you have some kind of talent/quality metal detector that you run over the post when it arrives in the morning or do you just run over the mailman as he strolls, whistling up your path, and use the art that magically survives the gore-filled catastrophe?

Issue #36 was made for me by the appearance of Mike Leonard and James Lyle's "Door Man"; an ongoing title of huge merit which just gathers strength and style as it rolls along picking up followers like moss on the proverbial stone.

"Stolen Years" was gently touching, strongly but sensitively dealing with age, regret and the guilt of unrevealled sin. Displaying religion in a personal way, almost like a respected friend which you felt you had let down. To a lonely pensioner the spiteful arcanum, became the company that constant pain or irritation can all too horribly become. You can get used to it, it becomes part of the routine and then when it goes, you feel lost without it. As if the pain or arcanum partly defined who you were.

The uplifting way Door Man tells Agnes that she has time to change things if she really wants to, I expect made a lot of us think about how every moment counts. As a teenager, we all seem to consider ourselves immortal, but to abandon that feeling and embrace our own inevitable demise, can be hideously obsessive.

Beautiful story, beautiful art, and a strange absence of Mike Leonard's letter at the back! Modestly shy all of a sudden, Mike?!

On a lighter note, I loved "Boondoogle", let's have more Santa vs. Krishna battles in Waffle Houses! Maple syrup with bruises, anyone?

"Mr. Mamoulian" continues to disturb me intensely and I can't help but think that every town has its own Mr. Mamoulian, just as every woodland has an undiscovered life form, ... but you don't necessarily want to meet either.

Please, sir, ... can I have some more!

Nice to hear from you Debra! I always love to hear from first time writers! Hope to hear from you again soon. And all you other "I've been meaning to write in but I have to take my dog to the vet" or "my dog ate my copy of NEGATIVE BURN" don't make me come out there looking for you. WRITE IN!

See ya next month.

Joe

***CORRECTION!** I would like to offer my sincere apologies to Nick Wyche and John Holmes for incorrectly crediting their "Shadow City" short story last issue (#39). Because of this their names were also left off the cover list of the creators to be found inside that particular issue. Luckily, the story itself contained the proper credits. I'm extremely embarrassed about this mistake and want to publicly apologize to Nick and John and also thank them fore understanding the mistakes I made.*

BACK iSSUES

NEGATIVE BURN

Issue #	
No. 1	$5.00
No. 2	$4.00
No. 3, 13	$8.00 each
No. 4-12, 14-17, 19- 24, 26, 27	$2.95 each
No. 25, 29-31, 33-up	$3.95 each
Best of NB Year 1 & 2 (tpb)	$9.95 each

Please note: Negative Burn issues #18, 28, and 32 are SOLD OUT
Issues #15-17, 20, 23, 25, 27, 31 are in VERY SHORT SUPPLY

KILROY IS HERE

No. 0, 1-up	$2.95 each	
Kilroy: Revelations No. 1	$2.95	
Kilroy: The Short Stories	$2.95	**VERY SHORT SUPPLY**

BONESHAKER

No. 1. A collection of Phillip Hester's popular serial that ran in the pages of Negative Burn. 64 pages. $3.50

CALIBER SPOTLIGHT

No. 1. Featuring ALL-NEW stories of Caliber's most popular series (KABUKI, AKA GOLDFISH, KILROY, and OZ), along with special NEW WORLDS previews and interviews.
$2.95

CALIBRATIONS

No. 1 Features the very first appearance of KILROY by Joe Pruett and Bil Ruth. Also includes Vince Locke, Guy Davis, and others.**VERY SHORT SUPPLY**
$10.00

EXIT

No. 1-up. See why critics and fans alike are praising Nabiel Kanan's tale of deception, love, hate, and growing up. This Caliber series presents ALL-NEW material.
$2.95 each

EXIT: Trade Paperback. Reprinting the previous eight issue run from Taxi Comics.
$14.95

Mail Orders to:
JOE PRUETT
PO BOX 893
ACWORTH, GA 30101

Please enclose a check or money order payable to Joe Pruett. **US FUNDS ONLY.**

SHIPPING INFORMATION

If your order is...	
Under $10.00	Add $2.00
$10.01 to $25.00	Add $3.50
$25.01 to $75.00	Add $5.00
over $75.00	***FREE***

From the haunting mind of JOHN BERGIN

GOLGOTHIKA

"ONCE UPON A TIME, I WAS A MAN..."

FOR CROSSING WERNER HERZOG, THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL LEADER HELMUT'S BRAIN WAS DOWNLOADED INTO THE VAT-GROWN BODY OF A GREEN FOUR-FOOT-TALL GARGOYLE. NOW HE MUST CRAWL OUT OF "HELL" AND SAVE THE WOMAN HE LOVES AND EXACT REVENGE ON THE MAN WHO RIPPED HIS LIFE TO SHREDS.

NOVEMBER 1996

FROM CALIBER COMICS

BY DAVID BOLLER **ON SALE NOW!** FROM CALIBER COMICS

CALIBER COMICS

OCTOBER 1996

CALIBRATIONS #5
Featured this issue: an original "ORLAK"short by Inferno writer Mike Carey and artist David Hill. ORLAK will be returning in a new series very soon! Also the concluding chapter to Warren Ellis' ATMOSPHERICS! With art by Ken Meyer Jr. Only ¢.99!

A CASE OF BLIND FEAR G.N.
Sherlock Holmes is sent to "uncover" a mysterious man's secret. But the man's lies aren't the only thing transparent about him! Written by Martin Powell and art by Seppo Makinen. Originally printed by Eternity Comics as a four issue series in 1989, now collected for the first time in one volume! 128 pages.

KILROY IS HERE #11
Guest writer Warren Ellis' and artist Richard Pace deliver "Screen," the tale of a FBI agent on the case of a serial killer in Washington, D.C. Also back-up story by series creator Joe Pruett with artist Guy Burwell.

KINGDOM OF THE WICKED #2
In this issue, Christopher Grahame, a well known children's author, continues to have blackout spells that plagued his childhood. During these bouts of pain, he returns to the land of Castrovalva, wartorn, and inhabited by the flesh-eating monster, Mugwomp. Written by Ian Edginton with art by D'Israeli.

THE LOST #1
Almost a century ago, James Barrie chronicled the adventures of "the little boy who wouldn't grow up". Things have changed in one-hundred years. Now, Peter cruises the streets of New York with his band of Lost Boys, a lonely girl named Wendy and an old enemy who lurks in the darkness waiting to strike. Written by Marc Andreyko, with art by Galen Showman and Jay Geldhof-- also featuring a back-up story by Mark Ricketts.

NEGATIVE BURN #40
Features the return of Ted Slampyak's "Suzi Romaine", "The Brutalizers" by Martin Conaghan, Dave Braysher and Mike Perkins, Plus many more...64 pages!

SILENT INVASION #5
Part two of the "Red Shadows" storyline. Phil Housley and the Council search for Matt Sinkage who has led to Union City to hide from the saucers and his own nightmares. By Larry Hancock and Michael Cherkas.

WORDSMITH #9
Inspired by the death of a longtime friend, Clay decides to pay tribute to the man by writing a story that parallels his friend's life. However, he may be in over his head when he gets into the ring with a professional boxer for research. Written by Dave Darrigo with art by R.G. Taylor.

THE WRETCH #2
One of the funniest and scariest books out today! You'll pee your pants in sheer terror while reading "The Sun" by Phillip Hester and Ande Parks, and you'll also pee your pants in hysterical laughter while reading "Satan Crispies" by Colin Wales, Phillip Hester and Bruce McCorkindale! Face it, urine will be expelled from your helpless body one way or another!

New Worlds

LEGENDLORE #6
Dominic's chosen path leads toward disaster as he entrusts a mysterious stranger to help him bring back Silverfawn's deceased Elven son. Plus more tales of fantasy and adventure by Joe Martin and Philip Xavier.

RAVEN CHRONICLES #12
In "The Compensators", bodies begin to pop up around a mid-western town. Each murdered in very different manners, in what appears to be revenge killings. The local police are baffled and Raven, Inc. is called in to investigate. By Scottish creators Martin Conaghan and Will Pickering.

SEARCHERS #5
The Searchers have disbanded, and life goes on. But once you discover that your entire life is based on the dreams of a turn-of-the-century writer, can you ever go home again? By Colin Clayton, Chris Dows, and Art Wetherell.

Tapestry
Comics for readers of all ages.

EXPLORERS #1
Xenology. The science of the strange. Dr. Alexander Hunt and family are an investigative team empowered to search where other agencies cannot—or will not—go. Global troubleshooters in the tradition of Johnny Quest, they specialize in the fantastic and the unknown. By Terry Collins, Bill Neville and Rick Ketcham.

PAKKINS' LAND #1
A series of strange events leads our hero, Paul, to a fantastic world called "Pakkins' Land". There he meets a mysterious Eagle of light that gives Paul a token of friendship, only to disappear and leave him lost in this new world. By Gary and Rhoda Shipman.

PATTY CAKE #1
View life through the perspective of seven-year-old Patty Cake. Small events are exaggerated in importance, friendships are a constant test of ego, and parents loom large. It's a fun dose of childhood for those who need to fill up now and again. By Scott Roberts.

TERROR TOTS SPECIAL
Out of the past and into the suburbs as five martial artists from Medieval China are reincarnated as quintuplet toddlers in a Chicago suburb—where their archenemies are waiting, reborn as the mean kids from down the block! By Len Strazewski and Paul Fricke. A super-satire for all ages.

Check your local retailer first, but if you have difficulties locating CALIBER titles call 1-888-22-COMIC For ordering information.

The DÆMONSTORM Special #1 Features a cover by

TODD McFARLANE

Entire Issue In FULL COLOR!

Look For It In Stores This JANUARY 1997!

DÆMONSTORM is ® and ™ 1996 Caliber Comics.